

CINEFANTASTIQUE

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007

Pierce Brosnan,
Famke Janssen,
putting Bond back
on series' target.

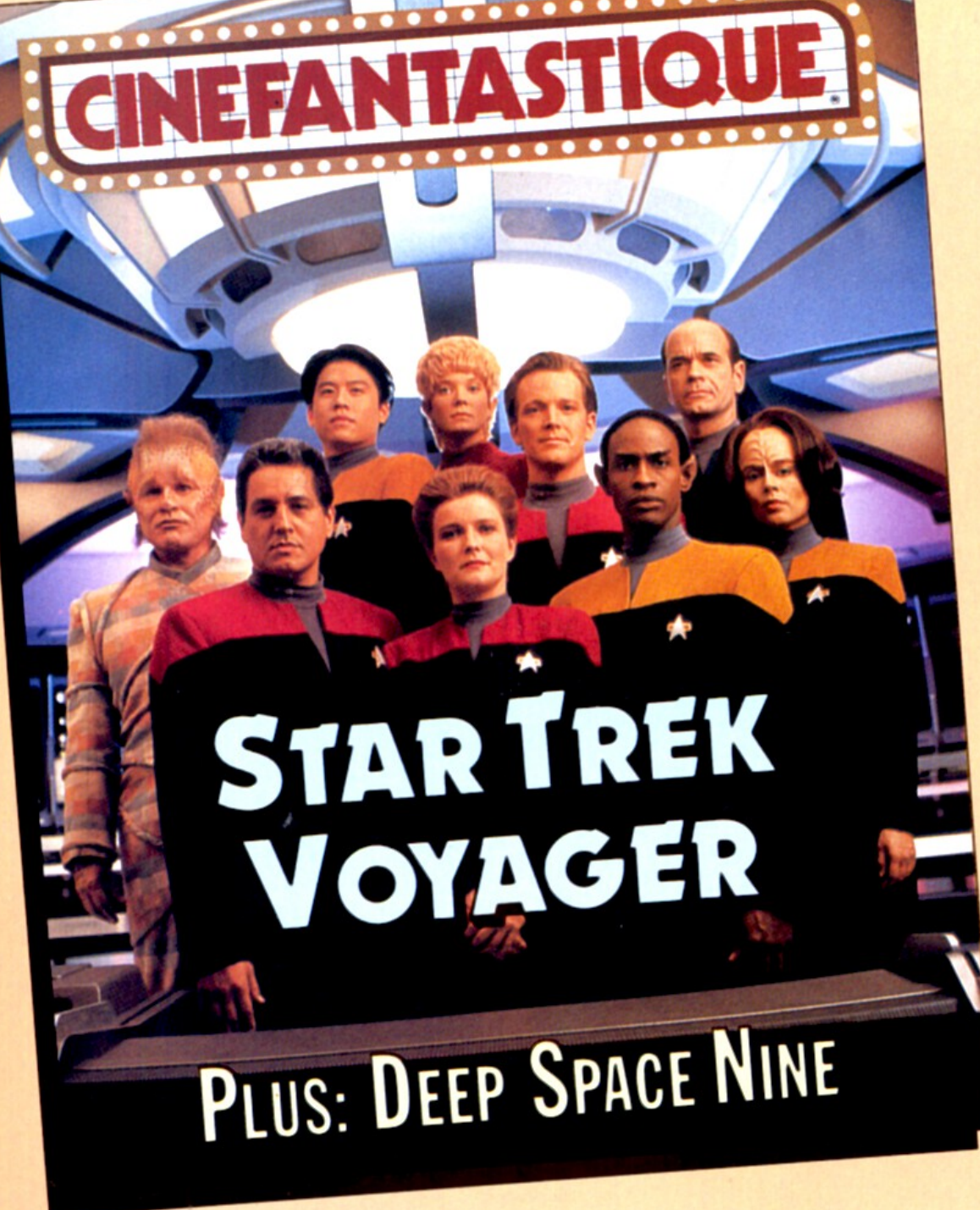
GOLDENEYE

TERRY GILLIAM'S
"12 MONKEYS"

SEAN CONNERY'S
"DRAGONHEART"



CINEFANTASTIQUE



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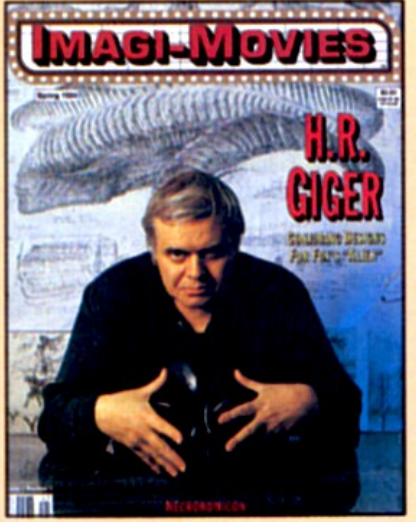
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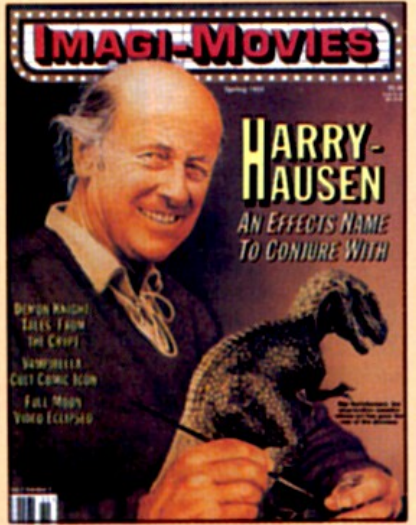
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The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

DECEMBER 1995

Welcome to the first monthly issue of *Cinefantastique*. Let's face it: whereas long, long ago, there was barely enough genre product to justify a quarterly, now there's just too much to fit into a bi-monthly. *Imagi-Movies* was supposed to be an answer to the problem—a magazine that would complement its parent publication and devote space to the sort of low-budget and independent items that had been pushed aside by the increasing proliferation of mainstream studio genre productions.

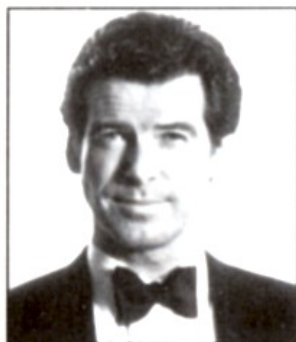
Although *IM* revived the Reviews section and several other elements that readers had expressed an interest in seeing again, there was still a large overlap between the two magazines—so much so, that, ultimately, it just made sense to fold *IM* into *CFQ*. Hopefully, this will truly be the best of both possible worlds, allowing extensive double-issue coverage of hot mainstream properties like *THE X-FILES* and *STAR TREK*, while at the same time leaving room for nostalgic retrospective articles, personality profiles of genre celebrities, in-depth analysis of current trends, and complete reviews of all genre films released theatrically, plus the usual previews, news, and notes you've come to expect.

A look at the contents to the right should confirm that the monthly schedule, far from stretching us thin, is allowing us to do better and more extensive coverage than ever before—from the big-budget extravaganza of the new James Bond film to the low-budget onslaught of the new *CHAINSAW* sequel. Along the way, we can also offer such firsts as our book review and excerpt of *Dark Carnival*. We also expand the Nostalgia column, first introduced in *IM*, which offers the recollections of genre fans fortunate enough to have seen classic films during their initial release. And believe it or not, there's still much more that wouldn't squeeze into this issue. So look forward to many jam-packed issues to come.

Steve Biodrowski



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EAGERLY AWAITED

TWELVE MONKEYS (Universal)

"This goes back into something much more visually strong than *THE FISHER KING*," says director Terry Gilliam of his latest science-fiction opus. Although the new film's closest visual reference point in the Gilliam oeuvre is *BRAZIL*, he also says it will reflect his newfound inclination, since making *THE FISHER KING*, to pay as much attention to the actors as to the effects. According to a 1990 *Los Angeles Times* article on the production of that film, fellow Python Eric Idle suggested that the fine performances in previous Gilliam films happened almost by default, so consumed was the director with the physical staging and the shots. On *THE FISHER KING*, Gilliam worked much more closely with the performers, talking out character and motivation; Mercedes Ruehl won an Oscar for her work on the film, and Robin Williams was nominated. *TWELVE MONKEYS* attempts to take that kind of dramatic strength and merge it with the visual flair of earlier Gilliam efforts, such as *BRAZIL* and *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN*. The film begins limited engagements in December to qualify for Academy Awards, then goes wide early next year. SEE PAGE 8

Andrew Markowitz

Christmas



RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson
(unless otherwise noted)

CITY OF LOST

CHILDREN (Triumph) November 11

Accenting innovative style over substance, and sumptuous imagery over a cohesive narrative thread, Jeunet and Caro's "BRAZIL for tiny-tots" tells the tale of crazed scientist Krank (played by Daniel Emilfork) who is abducting children from the nearby neo-Victorian harbor town and stealing their dreams, because he's convinced it will halt the aging process. Ron Perlman (*CRONOS*) is the circus strongman who invades Krank's castle-cum-oil rig laboratory and foils his plans with the help of a band of orphaned pickpockets. *DELICATESSEN* favorite Daniel Pinon also stars as Krank's six slave clones of himself, with Francois Hadji-Lazarro (*DELLA MORTE DELLAMORE*) as a camera-lensed, one-eyed Cyclops, and French acting icon Jean-Louis Trintignant supplying the voice of a talking brain kept in a fish tank by the mad inventor. SEE PAGE 10

Alan Jones

GOLDENEYE (UA)

November 17

Break out your Walter PPK and have a vodka martini—shaken not stirred—in celebration of the first Bond film in six years. That's a lot of expectations to live up to, but the advance word has been positive, and the trailer is great. SEE PAGE 14

JUMANJI (Tri-star)

November 17

Robin Williams stars as Alan Parish, who after 25 years is freed from the spell of an ancient magical board game named Jumanji—along with some exotic creatures which he must return to the game. Joe Johnston (*HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS*) directs. SEE CFQ 27:2

THE KINGDOM (October) November 10

Director Lars Von Trier (*ZENTROPA*) takes us on a surreal excursion through a medical institution where doctors run a black market supply operation in the basement and entertain themselves by initiating new brothers into a secret Masonic society, transplanting and retransplanting livers into their own bodies, and practicing voodoo on their colleagues.

MARY REILLY (Tri-Star) December 25

Stephen Frears' filmization of Valerie Martin's novel gets a limited release in time to qualify for the Academy awards, then opens wide on January 12. SEE CFQ 26:3

RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (Cinepix) Now playing

Cinepix, a new independent distributor, picked this low-budget film up for a planned Halloween release. Kim

Henkel, co-writer of the original, returns as writer and director of this third sequel. According to Henkel, after New Line made *LEATHERFACE: THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 3*, "There were certain aspects of the agreement that they wanted to renegotiate, and we simply refused. I think they were a bit offended, and they just let it lapse." The rights reverted to Henkel, allowing him to return to the independent approach of the original. "What happened on Parts 2 and 3 was pretty awful," he said. "When Tobe [Hooper] and I did the original, we were just a couple of kids, so we didn't have the inhibitions you have when you work in the Hollywood system, and we didn't have the kind of things going on that tend to homogenize everything. We also had a very personal investment in it—it was something that we did ourselves." SEE PAGE 12

SCREAMERS (Trimark) December 1

Peter Weller (*ROBOCOP0*) and Jennifer Rubin star in this science fiction thriller directed by Christian Duguay. Pushed back from an October release. SEE CFQ 27:2

TOY STORY (BV.) November 22

Disney promises to push the animation envelope with this film. A joint effort with Pixar, *TOY STORY* is the first ever all-computer-animated feature. John Lasseter, a pioneer in the field of computer animation, served as director of this "buddy story" of two toys, a cowboy doll named Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) and an action figure named Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen), who team up to escape the clutches of the neighborhood's "toy-torturing kid." Judging from the extensive clips shown earlier this year at Disney's Central Park preview, the animators have achieved some of the most fluid and realistic computer animation ever seen, featuring the subtleties of hand-drawn and stop-motion animation, while using the eye-popping 3-D elements that computers provide. In addition to its leading men, the film also boasts an eclectic cast of supporting voices, including Annie Potts as Little Bo Peep, Wallace Shawn as a neurotic T-Rex doll, and—an inspired bit of casting—Don Rickles as Mr. Potato Head. SEE CFQ 27:2

Michael Lyons

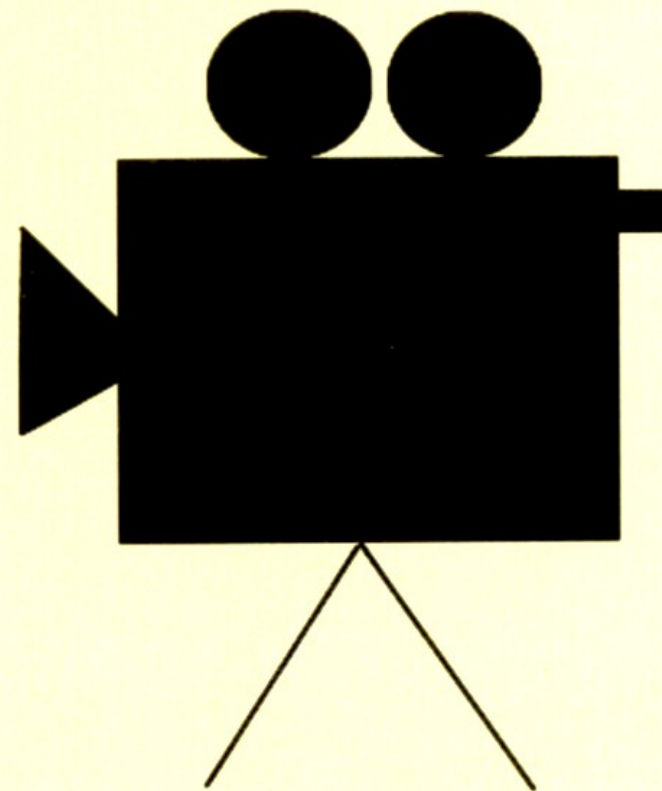
DRACULA SUCKS AGAIN

DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT (Columbia)

Is there really anywhere left for Mel Brooks and Leslie Nielsen to go with yet another Dracula parody? While there is plenty of comedic fodder in the present trend of turning monsters into sexy anti-heroes in such romantic twaddle as *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992), *MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN*, *WOLF*, and *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* (all 1994), this aspect was already explored in *LOVE AT FIRST BITE* (1979). Hamilton's vampire is suave and romantic, wooing super model Cindy Sondheim (Susan St. James) with such declarations as, "In a world without romance, it is better to be truly dead." Even would-be vampire hunter Dr. Jeffrey Rosenberg (Richard Benjamin), the grandson of Prof Van Helsing, despairs, "[Dracula] is a vile, evil monster, and I think he's better in bed with my girl than I am!" High school horror film buff Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale) expressed similar concerns about the influence of sexy vampire Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon) over his girlfriend (Amanda Bearse) to has-been horror star Peter Vincent (Roddy McDowell) in *FRIGHT NIGHT* (1985). Clearly, the seductive powers of vampires have been effectively satirized in the past. Besides, with senior citizen Nielsen in the lead, just how sexy could Brooks' Count be?

Considering the overabundance of existing vampire spoofs and Brooks' waning talents at parody, it's not unreasonable to expect *DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT* to be met with more cries of "Oy vey!" than howls of laughter. By plumbng the same depths as *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*, Brooks is doing a disservice to both himself and what little audience he has left. SEE NEXT ISSUE

Dan Cziraky



Christmas

HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN RESERVOIR VAMPIRES?

by Michael Beeler

Pop quiz, hot shot! You're a young film maker who has just received his first Academy Award; almost every film you have been even loosely associated with has been critically acclaimed and commercially successful; your career in Hollywood is going absolutely gangbusters and you want to do one last film before you take a well-deserved year-long, hiatus. What do you do? WHAT DO YOU DO?

If you're Quentin Tarantino, the eccentrically creative director of the dynamically gritty RESERVOIR DOGS and PULP FICTION, you do a comedy! But, not just any comedy. No, you do a visually graphic, intensely violent, vampire-exploding, Aztec-inspired, Mexican horror comedy. And, you hire the EL MARIACHI man himself, Robert Rodriguez, to direct it.

Set for a December 22, 1995 theatrical release, Miramax's FROM DUSK TO DAWN, chronicles one day and night in the lives of the ultra-violent Gecko brothers. The movie begins at the tail end of the brother's bloody crime spree through the Southwest and the eventual abduction of the vacationing Fuller family. The Geckos, along with their captives, subsequently wind up in a sleazy all night titty bar in Mexico. The bar, they soon discover, is an ancient hang out for vampires. Consequently, all hell breaks loose.



PULP FICTION's Quentin Tarantino (above) and director Robert Rodriguez (DESPERADO) team up on the vampire-action flick FROM DUSK TILL DAWN.

The feature was written for the screen and executively produced by Tarantino, who also portrays the younger, out-of-control Richard Gecko. Other stars include Harvey Keitel (PULP FICTION), as Jacob Fuller, a disillusioned minister on a road trip with his teenage children; George Clooney (E.R.) as the older, more honorable, Seth Gecko; and Juliette Lewis (NATURAL BORN KILLERS) as Kate Fuller, an initially naive teenager vacationing with her family. The film also boasts Tom

Savini (DAWN OF THE DEAD), Ernest Liu (GENERAL HOSPITAL), and DESPERADO alumni Salma Hayek and Cheech Marin.

Roughly five years ago Robert Kurtzman, one of the founding partners of KNB EFX Group (ARMY OF DARKNESS), wrote the story that forms the basis of this production. At that time he and co-producer Jon Esposito hired an aspiring, albeit untested, screenwriter to develop the script. It was his first paid writing gig, and they got him cheap.

"I had never been hired to write anything before," admitted Tarantino, whose two spec scripts had yet to be made into movies. "I had no money, and I was working day jobs. [Kurtzman and Esposito] wanted a screenwriter for a low-budget horror film. I met them through my friend Scotty Spiegel, who wrote EVIL DEAD II. They read TRUE ROMANCE and NATURAL BORN KILLERS and liked them, so they said, 'We'd like to hire you.' They paid me \$1,500 dollars."

Filling out Kurtzman's storyline, Tarantino illuminated the twisted comedy with certain bloody elements of the pre-Hispanic Aztecs rather than the more traditional

Production Starts

DIABOLIQUE

Forget about Jason vs. Freddy—this film features the greatest combo since King Kong met Godzilla: femme fatales Sharon Stone and Isabelle Adjani square off in this remake of Clouzot's highly regarded B&W film, which starred Simone Signoret. Two women team up to kill the husband of one of them, but then the body disappears and things start to go bump in the night. Has he come back from the dead, or is there a Machiavellian plot afoot?

THE FRIGHTENERS

Robert Zemeckis produces this Universal film from director Peter Jackson (DEAD ALIVE), starring Michael J. Fox, Jeffrey Combs, John Astin, and Dee Wallace-Stone. Fox plays a psychic investigator. Jackson promises "the energy of DEAD ALIVE, with ghosts instead of gory zombies."

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Director Roland Emmerich and writer Dean Devlin, the team behind last year's surprise hit STAR GATE, rejoin forces for this tale of an interplanetary invasion of Earth that strikes on July 4. Impressive cast includes Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Bill Pullman, Randy Quaid, Judd Hirsch, Mary McDonnell, and Brent Spiner.

MULTIPLICITY

Michael Keaton stars as ad exec Doug Kinney who doesn't have enough time in his life—until a scientist clones him. Andie McDowell, who previously teamed with director Harold Ramis for GROUND-HOG DAY, plays Kinney's wife. The script is also by the writing team from that film, the husband and wife duo Chris Miller and Mary Hale.

PINOCCHIO

Fresh off his ED WOOD Oscar for playing Bela Lugosi, Martin Landau stars for director Steve Barron as Gepeto. Effects by Jim Henson's Creature Shop. Also in the cast: Genevieve Bujold, Bebe Neuwirth, and Udo Keir.

SPACE JAM

Basketball stars Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley make the jump to acting in this combination of animation and live-action, produced by Ivan Reitman (GHOST-BUSTERS).

THINNER

Robert Burke, Joe Mantegna, and Keri Whurer star in this adaptation of one of Stephen King's Richard Bachman books, directed by Tom Holland (FRIGHT NIGHT), written by Michael McDowell (BEETLE-JUICE).

Short Notes

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER: THE MOTION PICTURE has been completed, using Universal's classic THIS ISLAND EARTH. Rocker **Dave Alvin** has recorded a new version of the theme song, backed up by series regular **Kevin Murphy**. Grammercy Pictures will release the flick next February. ☺ Toho has announced GODZILLA VS. DESTROYER as the next title in the seemingly unending series. Series veteran **Akira Ifikube** will compose the score. The monster is the result of the oxygen destroyer that put an end to the first Godzilla. Because GODZILLA VS. SPACE GODZILLA did not do the business of the previous films, Toho is claiming that this installment will be the last. But don't count on it: after the success of Daie Studios' excellent GAMERA: GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE, which Toho distributed, expect a team up of the rival monsters. ☺ **Tim Burton** is prepping MARS ATTACKS! at Warners, based on the infamous, graphically rendered bubblegum cards; if it's a success, expect Burton to follow up with DINOSAURS ATTACK! ☺ **Joel Schumacher** has signed for BATMAN IV. □

continued on page 61

Obituaries

by Mike Lyons & Jay Stevenson

Friz Freleng

Bugs Bunny would not have been the same without Yosemite Sam, and the world of animation would not have been the same without Friz Freleng. The hot-tempered, tiny Texan was one of the many creations of Isidore (Friz) Freleng during his tenure at the Warner Bros. animation studio.

Freleng came to Hollywood in 1927. After a brief stay at Disney, he left with fellow animators Rudolph Ising and Hugh Harman, and became one of the founders of the Warners Bros. Animation Studio in 1930. One of the first shorts he directed for the studio was 1935's *I HAVEN'T GOT A HAT*, featuring the big-screen debut of Porky Pig.

Through the subsequent "Golden Age of Animation" at Warners, Freleng, along with Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, and Bob Clampett, helped define the personalities of Bugs Bunny, Tweety, and Daffy Duck, which set the standard for cartoon comedy. At the time, film makers were under strict guidelines from theatre owners to keep cartoon shorts under a specific time limit. Freleng used this to his advantage, perfecting his comic timing, (some even say he had certain "gags" down to the exact frame).

In 1941's *HARE TRIGGER*, Freleng introduced Yosemite Sam. Friz would allow Bugs Bunny to torture this pint-size pistol-packer through numerous shorts, including the Academy Award-winning *KNIGHTY-KNIGHT BUGS* (1958).

During the waning years of Warner animation, Freleng left the studio and joined forces with producer David DePatie to form DePatie-Freleng Enterprises, Inc. The studio's first job was the title sequence of director Blake Edwards' *THE PINK PANTHER* (1964). The character would prove to be so popular that it would spawn a series of theatrical cartoon shorts, (the first, 1964's *THE PINK PHINK* would bring Freleng yet another Oscar).

In his later years, Freleng came back to Warners, directing compilation films featuring the Looney Tunes gang (1981's *THE LOONEY, LOONEY, LOONEY BUGS BUNNY MOVIE*). Friz himself can also be seen, along with other Warner animators, discussing his work in the excellent documentary, *BUGS BUNNY: SUPERSTAR* (1975), a must-see for all animation buffs.

Friz Freleng passed away this May at the age of 89, leaving be-

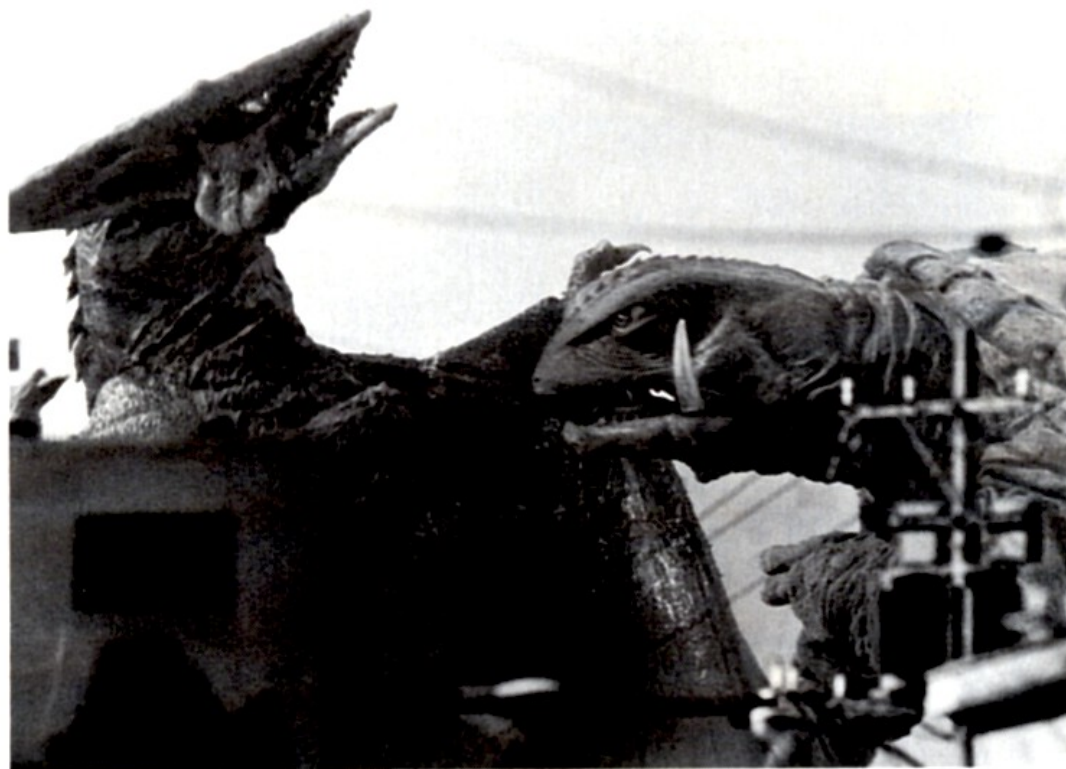
The Return of Gamera, Guardian of the Universe

Surprise: the new film is great!

by Steve Ryfle

In the 1990s, giant monsters are alive and well in Japan, although no one seems to be noticing in the West. Toho has made six new Godzilla movies in the past decade, and in 1993 *GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA* was the top-grossing domestic film. In the early 1990s, rival Daiei studio sensed an opportunity and began planning the revival of its own monster, but the result, *GAMERA, THE GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE* (released in Japan in March 1995) resembles the old *GAMERA* series in name only, and proves that the Japanese film industry still has something to offer in the monster department. Reportedly made for a mere \$4.5 million, the movie looks as if it cost five times that much, and its imaginative story and effects surpass anything in Toho's new-look (and twice as expensive) Godzilla series.

Rather than pick up where the old series left off, director Shusuke Kaneko and writer Kazunari Ito (who had worked together on an episode of the Brian Yuzna-produced trilogy, *NECRONOMICON*) decided to start from scratch and play the monster straight, cutting out his goofy somersaults and banzai-dancing. After a one-week run in Dallas, Texas, this June, at press time, Daiei was reportedly negotiating with U.S. distributors for an early 1996 home video release. With his dubious reputation, *Gamera's* latest will not get a wide theatrical release this side of the Pacific: he could show Hollywood it's possible to make a great monster movie, even without high-tech and big bucks. □



The new—and vastly improved—film pits Gamera against Gyaos.

hind work that spans over five decades and laughter that will last for generations to come.

Julian Blaustein

The 82-year-old producer of *BELL, BOOK, AND CANDLE* (1958) died earlier this year after a long battle with cancer. Although his genre credits were few, he earned a place of distinction with the classic, *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951), directed by Robert Wise. At a retrospective screening of the film two years ago, he revealed that a newspaper headline referring to a "Peace Offensive" had first given him the idea for a film that would cast a jaundiced eye at nuclear proliferation. When he came across the short story "Farewell to the Master," he knew he had found the perfect basis for his film, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Miklos Rosa

The three-time Oscar-winner died of pneumonia at 88. Along with Erich Wolfgang Korngold and Bernard Herrmann, he was a composer who set the standard for film music with such classic efforts as *SPELLBOUND* (1945) and *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* (1944). His genre work includes *THE THIEF OF BAGHDAD* (1940), *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* (1974), and *TIME AFTER TIME* (1978).

Alexander Gudonov

The Soviet ballet dancer, who de-

fect to the United States, was found dead in his West Hollywood home this May, of acute alcoholism. His most prominent film roles were in *WITNESS* and *DIE HARD*, but he gave solid performances in such genre fare as *WAXWORK II* and, particularly, the unfairly neglected *THE RUNESTONE*.

Al Adamson

The body of the low-budget exploitation director (*DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN*, *SATAN'S SADISTS*, et al) was found by police early this August, entombed in his indoor whirlpool tub, which had been filled with cement and tiled over. He had been missing for 5 weeks. Police are looking for independent contractor Fred Fulford, 46, who had been living at Adamson's house while doing remodeling. □

A Director in the House?

After three days of shooting on *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU* during the beginning of August, helmer Richard Stanley, who also had a hand in the screenplay, was fired. Production shut down while New Line sought a new director. A week later, veteran John Frankenheimer was selected, although his deal was nearly scuttled during a meeting in Hollywood—by a disagreement with Marlon Brando, who stars as the title character (the doctor, not the island). A subsequent meeting with New Line honchos Bob Shaye and Michael De Luca ironed things out. (Brando was not responsible for Stanley's departure; the actor wasn't even scheduled to begin work until Labor Day—he had been working on another film.) Also starring are Val Kilmer and Ron Perlman. Barbara Steele made a cameo appearance in pre-production footage shot by Stanley (which was to be seen via television monitor); whether or not this will be scrapped was unknown at press time.



Above: Dennis Quaid's 10th-century knight pulls a sword from the mouth of a dragon he had previously intended to slay (bottom of page), thereby earning the noble beast's gratitude (right). Below: the mechanical jaws used on location.



DRAGONHEART

Dennis Quaid teams up with Sean Connery's voice in a tale of Draco the talking Dragon.

preview by James Van Hise

At one point intended for a summer release, Universal's DRAGONHEART has been pushed back a full year in order to provide more time for ILM to complete the computer generated imagery that will not only bring a dragon to life but also allow him to talk—lip-synching to the voice of Sean Connery.

Based on an original screenplay by Charles Edward Pogue (whose genre credits are PSYCHO III, David Cronenberg's remake of THE FLY, and the upcoming ARABIAN NIGHTS), the film was directed by Rob Cohen (DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY) after Richard Donner dropped out during the development phase. Rafella De Laurentiis, daughter of Dino De Laurentiis, produced.

Dennis Quaid stars as a 10th-century knight who topples an evil despot (David Thewlis) after teaming up with a dragon he had at first set out to slay. Also in the cast are Pete Postlethwaite, Julie Christie, and Dina Myer.

Concerns about the large budget was responsible for the long development period, during which Richard Donner tried unsuccessfully to put the project together with Harrison Ford in the lead. Once Cohen and Quaid committed, the budget was streamlined and the project was rapidly green-lighted. (Ironically, Quaid's previous appearance, in WYATT EARP, was opposite Kevin Costner, who went on to Universal's mega-million dollar WATERWORLD.)

The production shot for over 100 days in the Koliba Studios in Bratislava, Slovakia, where stage rental runs \$300 a day, as opposed to \$4,000 to \$6,000 a day in Hollywood. Principal photography, as well as Connery's voice track, were completed by the end of 1994, but post-production was extended because of the volume of effects devoted to Draco the talking dragon.

"Draco is a character..." is the way Cohen explained it to *Hollywood Reporter*. "Let's put it this way: There were 59 CGI shots in JURASSIC PARK, and this has 170." □



TWELVE MONKEYS

Bruce Willis travels time to save the future.

By Andy Markowitz

Terry Gilliam looks tired. His usually cherubic face seems drawn and haggard, an effect enhanced by his shoulder-length hair and broad-brimmed black hat. Outside, it's a sunny Baltimore morning, but Gilliam and crew are deep in the artificially lit bowels of an old power plant, presiding over the creation of a world that doesn't exist yet.

The director and a few others stand by a skeletal hospital bed surrounded by equipment that looks both archaic and futuristic, enclosed by a curtain hanging from a rod several dozen feet above. They are a few days from wrapping production of *TWELVE MONKEYS* after a three-month shoot that, judging by their faces, probably seemed a lot longer. Gilliam turns to greet a visitor to the set, who expresses admiration for the former Monty Python member's stunningly imaginative film work. "Well," Gilliam responds with a weary chuckle, "we'll soon change all that."

Bruce Willis—as Cole, a violent, sociopathic convict who returns to 1996 to save humankind—confers with director Terry Gilliam.

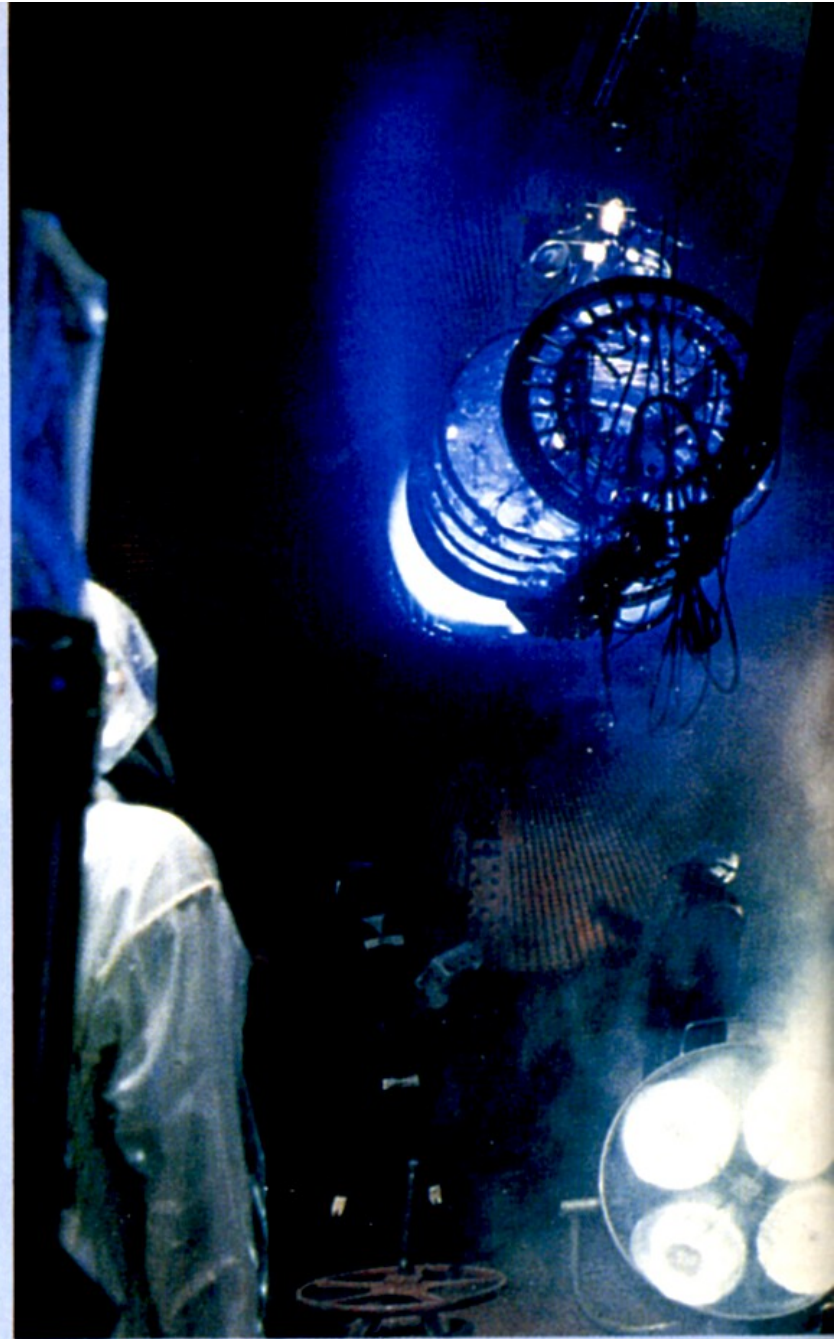


A few weeks later, interviewed by phone from the London studio where he's cutting the film, the 54-year-old director sounded less tired but just as bemused. Speaking in a voice that betrays his nearly three decades in England more than his American roots, it's clear that, if nothing else, he hasn't lost his sense of humor.

TWELVE MONKEYS is Gilliam's seventh film as a director but only the second in which he did not have a hand in the script. That is the handiwork of the husband and wife team of David and Janet Webb Peoples; David rewrote the *BLADE RUNNER* screenplay and won an Oscar nomination for *UNFORGIVEN*. Their inspiration for *TWELVE MONKEYS* was *LA JETEE*, the 1962 short film by the legendary French filmmaker Chris Marker, who used still photos and voice-over narration to tell the story of a band of post-nuclear survivors who live underground and use time travel to try to reclaim their world.

In *TWELVE MONKEYS*, it's disease

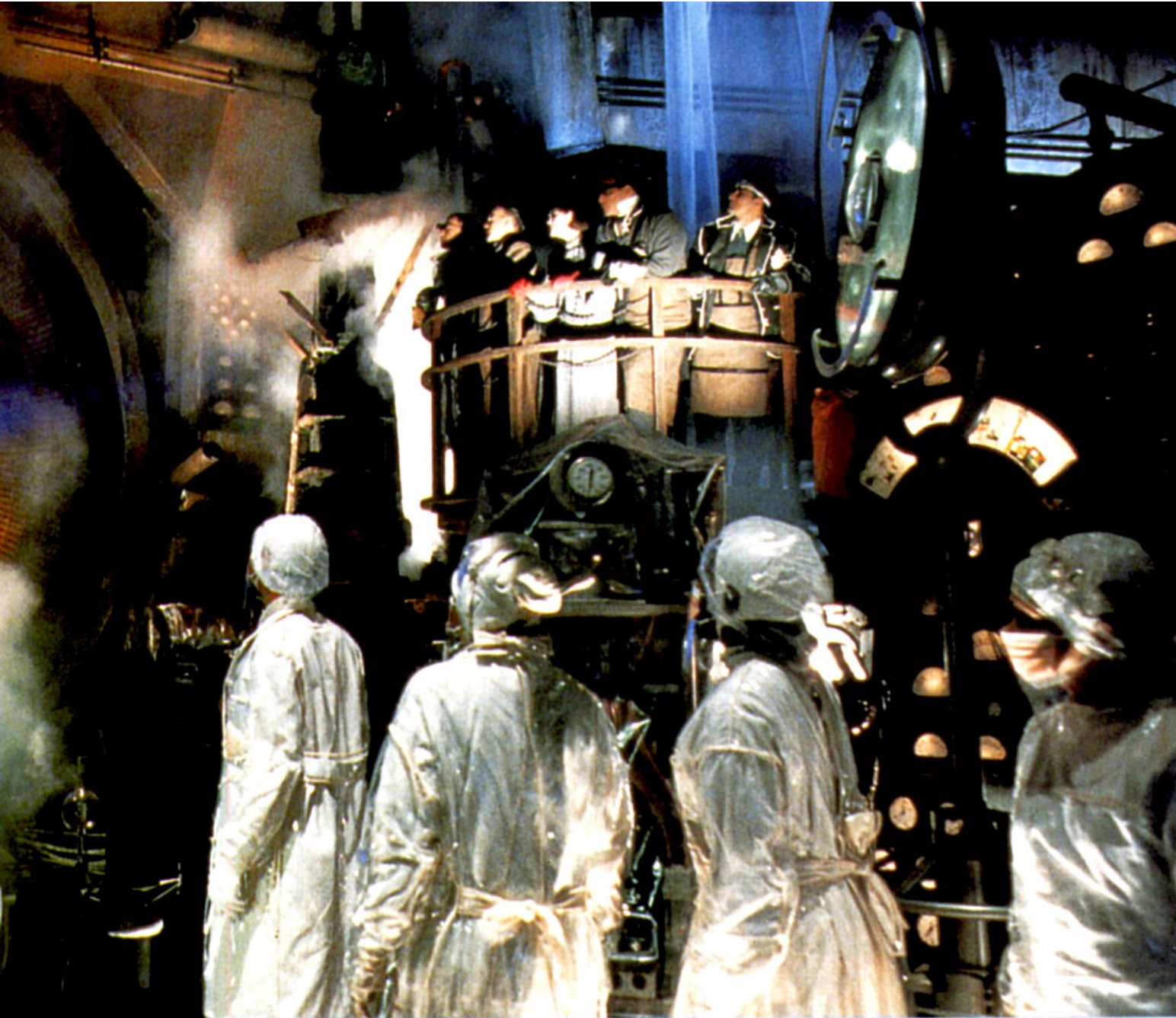
rather than atomic destruction that has driven a surviving few underground. The framing story takes place in 2035, after a virus called CZT has wiped out 99 percent of the world's population and made the surface uninhabitable. A group of scientists in subterranean Philadelphia send Cole (Bruce Willis) back to 1996 in search of clues about the impending outbreak that might help save the future before humankind dies out entirely. Cole is a violent, sociopathic convict, but he possesses one key qualification—a recurring vision from his childhood in the pre-CZT world that he doesn't understand but is obsessed with unraveling. Projected back into late-20th century Baltimore, Cole becomes



involved with a psychiatrist who's an expert in madness and prophecy (Madeline Stowe); a renowned scientist pursuing deadly experiments (Christopher Plummer); and the scientist's son (Brad Pitt), a member of a cryptic society called the Army of the Twelve Monkeys that may hold clues to the impending epidemic. Or maybe not. "Part of the film is to keep the audience off balance—not to know whether Cole is insane or not," says production designer Jeffrey Beecroft—an Oscar nominee (for *DANCES WITH WOLVES*), who first worked with Gilliam

Disease, not atomic war, has devastated humanity.





In 2035, 99% of the world's population is gone, and the surviving few are forced live underground.

on a Nike commercial last year. "Is this the real world he's seeing, this underworld, or is it his imagination?"

This uncertainty is one of the things that attracted Gilliam to the script. "I did like the intelligence, the way it played with time and perception and madness and all those things." The attraction isn't surprising. The thin line between fantasy and fact, the tension between the rational, the magical, and the mad have been hallmarks of Gilliam's work since his perversely brilliant Python animations. The whimsical *TIME BANDITS* (1982), the dystopian *BRAZIL* (1985), and the flawed but visually sumptuous *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHASEN* (1989), all of which he co-wrote, form a virtual trilogy on the subject. 1991's *THE FISHER KING*, though it was his first film as a hired gun, turned on a similar theme, with Robin Williams as a homeless man struggling between mad visions and an even scarier reality.

With its mix of old and new technology, *TWELVE MONKEYS* also harkens back to *BRAZIL* visually, evoking a world that is utterly different, yet somehow familiar. Portions of the scientists' underground lair were built inside a cavernous 90-year-old Baltimore Gas & Electric plant shut down by the utility last year. Amid the enormous industrial-age turbines and tubes, the floor is littered with eccentric, visually striking objects, bits of old equipment and machinery fitted together like sculpture—typewriters, monitors, dental chairs, ticker tape—all seeming to have some use that can't quite

be ascertained. "It's really what we were doing in *BRAZIL* as well," admits Gilliam. "There was always this problem of not making it look like *BRAZIL*." He adds with a laugh, "We failed miserably."

Despite the fantastical elements, Gilliam clearly sees the film as less a fantasy than a fin-de-siecle parable—a reflection of where we might be headed. Queried on the set toward the end of filming about how he would describe the film—science fiction or fantasy—he smiled and replied, "I think it's a documentary."

Asked about the comment a few weeks later, Gilliam laughed at the recollection but explained that he was only half-kidding. "When I went to Rome, I discovered Fellini was a documentary filmmaker. I thought he was a fantasist until I saw Rome. However bizarre *TWELVE MONKEYS* seems to be, I hope it's an accurate reflection of reality, and that's why I think it's a documentary. The things in it aren't invented; they're observed."

Filming in Philadelphia and Baltimore should help evoke that real sense of place. The Peoples' script set the story in the two cities, but

Gilliam says he was perfectly willing to film elsewhere until he actually scouted them as potential locations.

"Words that we bandied around were things like nostalgia and decay and entropy. The idea of ending up in places like Philadelphia and Baltimore was perfect. On the one hand, there are grand buildings and a former time of greatness, but in many occasions [they] have fallen into decay. That was interesting, because if we've got this guy living in this future world, having to live underground because of the foolishness of the human race at the end of the 20th century, then I think decay and the results of a rotting civilization are vital to the whole thing."

With *TWELVE MONKEYS*, Gilliam charted a middle ground "between the old, more exciting and the new, more actor-based me," he said. "I suppose I'm getting more intrigued with the characters and [their] emotional relationship." But none of the relationships in the film is likely to be as tangled as the one reformed in its production. For all the strange things viewers will see on-screen when *TWELVE MONKEYS* opens, perhaps none is stranger than who is paying Gilliam's bills: Universal, the studio with which he waged the epic battle of *BRAZIL* 10 years ago. (Universal objected to the film's dark tone and unhappy ending and hired freelance editors to do a recut. Gilliam raised a stink and showed his cut to critics, whose acclaim forced the studio to release his version.)

"The irony was too great to pass up," Gilliam said, his disarming giggle back in evidence. "They had the script; it was theirs. The interesting thing was, I got final cut of this. I said, 'I'm not going to go back there unless I get final control,' and they were willing."

"Whatever I do," he sighed, "I don't seem to be able to successfully burn bridges in Hollywood, try as I might." □

Madeline Stowe, a psychiatrist who's an expert on madness and prophecy, helps Cole (Willis) when he arrives in the 20th century.



The City of the Lost Children

French fairy tale from **DELICATESSEN** duo.



Above: Daniel Emilfork portrays Krank, a mad scientist who is abducting children from a nearby town. Below: One (Ron Perlman) is seduced by the Barmaid (Frankie Pain).

By Alan Jones

Although *LA CIDE DES ENFANTS PERDUS* (*THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN*) opened the 1995 Cannes Film Festival to a lukewarm critical response, the latest grunge fairy tale from the *DELICATESSEN* directing duo of Jeunet and Caro has been a blockbuster hit in France. Filmed entirely within the Boulogne Billancourt Studios, situated in the Paris suburb, Jean-Pierre Jeunet (credited with "mise-en scene/direction") and Mar Caro (given the "artistic direction" nod) have crafted another visually resplendent, surreal pinball-machine movie using plot inspirations culled from such diverse sources as Jules Verne, Charles Dickens, Tod Browning, and William Burroughs.

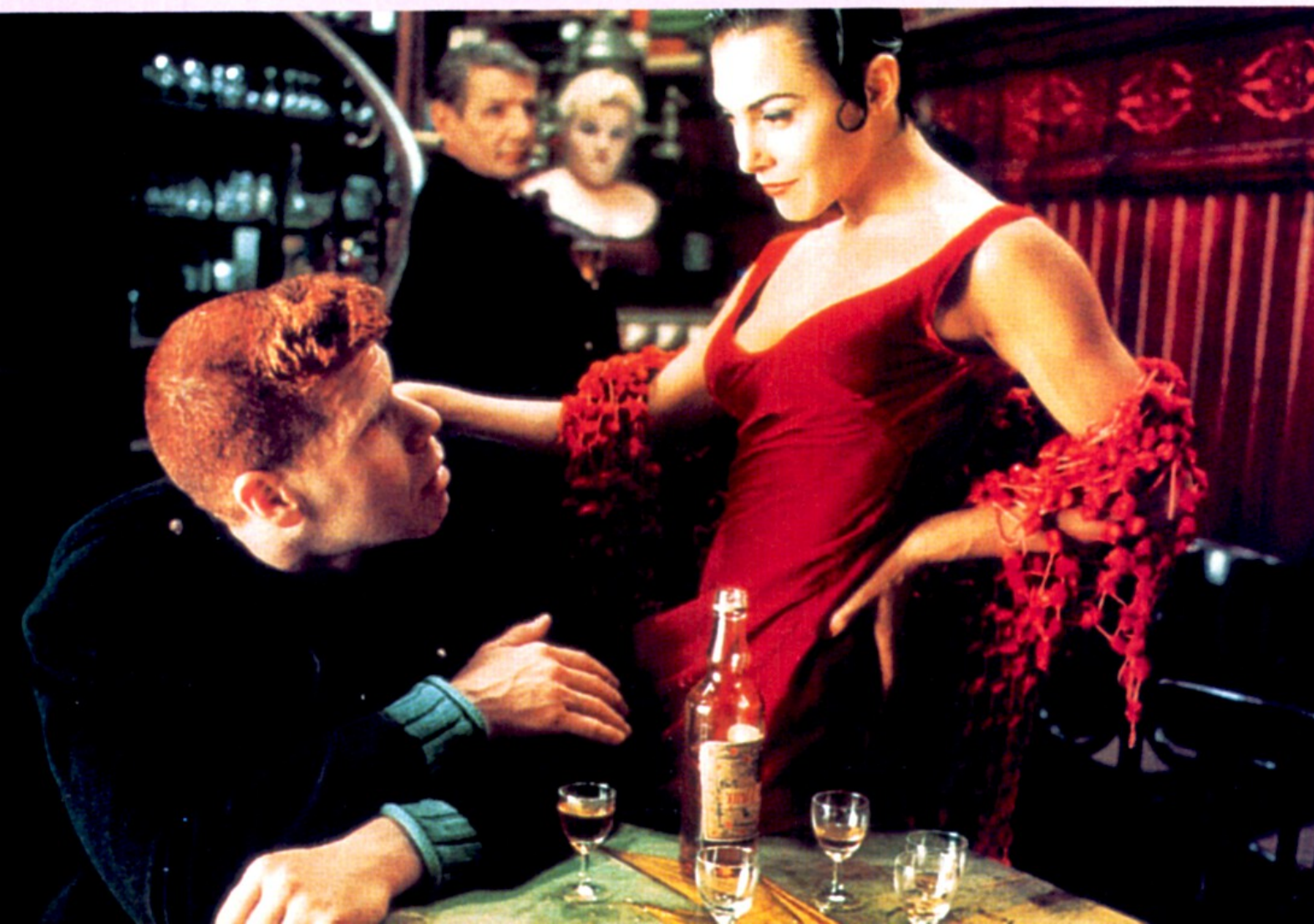
THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN took the French directors two years to make, including eight months devoted to the fanciful settings, amalgams of similar constructions for Jean-Jacques Beineix' *THE MOON IN THE GUTTER* and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *QUERELLE*). Budgeted at \$14 million, Jeunet and Caro's



Francis Hadji-Lazaro stars as the dreaded Cyclops.

Lynchian Looney Toons is not the most expensive French movie ever made (*QUEEN MARGOT* will remain that benchmark for many years to come). But from a special effects point-of-view, *THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN* is the most ambitious ever attempted on Gallic shores, needing a further five months of post-production by two computer graphic houses. The Dubois Company, under the supervision of Pitof, supplied 17 minutes of digital clone footage dream sequences, and Cyclops' visions; and the Buf Compagnie created Krank's morphing contortions, the Dream Bottle (which lures the "original" clone from his underwater hideout back to Krank's mist-shrouded lair), and the various flights of the freak-show owner's pet flea.

Jeunet and Caro wrote the screenplay (with Gilles Adrein) because, "All the best fairy tales are European, and that's what we are, European," said the latter. Caro continued, "*THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN* is 'Pinocchio,' the Brothers Grimm, Lewis Carroll, and Hans Christian Andersen all rolled into one. We made it to keep our cultural identity amongst the flood of American movies that go on release everywhere. That's why we haven't tried to copy any American special effects. We could never do it as well or have the financial resources to match ILM's work. Our special effects look entirely different because of this unique visual approach." Jeunet added,



"It has universal appeal because of that. The countries who embraced DELICATESSEN will react the same way to CITY because the emotions are international. The story is not fixed in one century or in one geographical location, so it can be placed by anyone anywhere. If we can please everyone, great...but we claim nothing for what's in the movie, because it's open to translation by every person and every culture."

With his background in comic book illustration (for the French classic *Metal Hurlant/Heavy Metal*), Caro drew every single frame as a storyboard to show his partner the multilayered fantasy textures he wanted. He remarked, "When we worked on the script together, we read lots of books about dreams and paradoxical sleep rhythms. But to categorically state CITY is about dreams is wrong. The dreams—and nightmares—we vibrantly detail are more a metaphor for our lost imagination. To properly enter dreams, you have to enter into psychoanalysis. That was not our purpose. The irony of dreaming in today's society was."

Continuing on the same theme, Jeunet added, "In fairytales there is usually a moral. We don't have one in CITY, as neither of us are arrogant enough to consider ourselves philosophers. If you must look for a message in what was devised to be a merely entertaining *divertissement*, it's that our future rests in the hands of our children. Hardly profound. Children have the capacity to dream more easily and not to analyze what they do dream about. Therefore, they are more open about the ways of the world, and that's what will be vitally important for our future, especially here in Europe."

The lack of any real message is one of the reasons why intellectual French critics have given THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN the thumbs down. Caro sighed, "They said they didn't understand it, they couldn't enter into it, and that it was pointless. What I think upset them the most is that the way the story is told is so different and complex on a narrative level. The plot structure goes from cause to effect, and the real story doesn't lock in until after about an hour. Children don't have this problem. They read stories differently today and are used to being bombarded with computer/interactive imagery. They take the few pieces of the story that interests them or



One (Ron Perlman), seen here with Miette (Judith Vittet), is a circus strongman who invades Krank's lab.

fits their attention span needs. And that's great because we never meant it to be a linear mystery with a beginning, a middle or an end."

Never fear, however. Jeunet and Caro's definition of "children" means anyone between 7 and 77 "as it's more a question of spirit than age mentality." Jeunet noted, "We are movie travel agents who are offering you the chance to take a voyage into the imagination. That's the moon-soaked destination in our bizarre universe. So either join us or go to some other travel agency for a more mundane trip!" Caro added, "If you are old in mind you will not enjoy our trip around the CITY. It's all about keeping your childlike curiosity, your power to marvel, and being filled with a sense of wonder. The lost children in our CITY, in particular Judith Vittet (who plays Perlman's sidekick Miette), have an absolute innocence, while the adults are all portrayed as the monsters. We are all monsters except when we are children. This is the basic truth of our world as we see it."

Jeunet and Caro met each other 20 years ago at the Animated Film Festival in Annecy. They were drawn together because of their shared backgrounds in comics and cartoons and began making short marionette puppet films when they joined forces later on in Paris. These led to many other shorts, title sequences and music videos until international fame and critical acclaim greeted their 1991 feature debut DELICATESSEN, a gag-packed future satire about cannibalism, sex and guerrilla warfare. How they codirect is something both refuse to comment on, saying only the finished product is important. However, Jeunet noncommittally said, "We work separately most of the time rather than together. But when we do team up we concentrate on developing an atmosphere and how best to use the artifice of the cinema for our own ends. We are like The Octopus in CITY (the name given Siamese Twins Genevieve Brunet and

Odile Mallet, who control the urchin pickpockets)—we have four hands all cooking together! The visual tools of the trade are getting bigger and more complicated and it's important we don't lose sight of the story we want to tell amongst them all."

Caro continued, "What was vitally important for me in CITY, and in DELICATESSEN, was to create a unique universe. It doesn't have to be believable either. While

some directors like exterior shooting, I don't because you have less control, you can't go to the design extreme, and you cannot invent your own physical rules. I would love to set a movie in a gravitational universe a thousand times superior to our own, for example. I love to experiment. That's the reason why I wanted 'The Butterfly Effect' in CITY. (Caro is describing a chain reaction sequence that links Vittet's teardrop to a crashing ocean liner). How something so small can become something so catastrophic and how sorrow can lead to something cataclysmic. I don't know what my job description is unless it's to make a spectator discover things he cannot feel for himself. A viewer doesn't need me to show him a beach on the sea shore. But he does need me to show him an abstract flea's eye journey through Ron Perlman's hair."

"But creating such a universe is expensive," said Jeunet. "The CITY sets cost a lot of money and we won't be able to do it every time. I have this fear of trying to do what someone like Stanley Kubrick does, which is composite a universe from many far-flung locations. How he can make a coherent film working that way is beyond me. For Caro and myself, we often have the atmosphere we are striving for before we have a story. THE CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN came about solely because of details we wanted to include in a scenario like boat sirens, harbour lights, fog, a flock of seagulls and Jean Paul Gaultier costumes. Our underwear is always Gaultier! That's why I never consider us as French movie directors. We have always worked in different ways from the rest of our industry. We are the cultural exceptions. But because our movies touch seriously on fantasy and fantasy is a serious business to us both—they travel all over the world paving the way for other more romantic French movies to follow. We make our movies not only to live ourselves, but also for French cinema to live on a global level, too." □

RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Leatherface is back, but can the series be saved?

By Gordon W. Frost

In the summer of 1972, director Tobe Hooper, writer Kim Henkel, and their friends travelled to a remote part of Texas to make their first film. What they would create would become one of the most successful independent films ever.

The article that you are about to read is the account of the tragedy which befell this classic film. It is all the more tragic in that, in one capacity or another, original members have been involved. Perhaps, had they been more involved and taken greater care, they would not have lived to see as much of the bad and mediocre as they did through the years. The events that have followed that idyllic summer film shoot have lead to one of the most brutal and unnecessary crimes in the annals of genre history... the massacring of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

Fourteen years after THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE made its horrifically successful debut, the saw roared again in THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

PART 2, but its teeth were dull. Three years later, the saw was family in LEATHERFACE: THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE III, but the family was gone. Now, just when you thought it was safe to travel deserted back roads and poke around abandoned, bone-riddled farm houses in the middle of nowhere, the saw is about to roar again. But will the old buzz be back? RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, shot independently and picked up for release by Cinepix, holds the answer.

After LEATHERFACE, the series can only go up...we hope. The reason for this hope comes in the form of Kim Henkel, who, along with Tobe Hooper, penned the original screenplay. Besides writing RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, Henkel also makes his directorial debut.

Perhaps with this being his fledgling effort, some of the original CHAINSAW's spontaneity and style will return as well.

This time, a group of prom-goers fall prey to the family after smashing their car and being picked up by Vilmer (Matthew McConaughey)'s towing service. The unknowing gang are quickly introduced to the rest of the clan: the family cook, an incessantly jabbering younger version of Jim Siedow's character (played by Joe Stevens); Vilmer's deranged (she'd have to be) girlfriend, Darla (Tonis Perensky); and, of course, Leatherface (played this time by musical stage actor Robert Jacks).

Oh, but I almost forgot about Grandpa. Old Gramps is back—and breathing. And at a glance, about 80 years younger than he was 20 years ago. He sure looks a damn sight better than he did in LEATHERFACE. Those that saw the film will remember that he was quite a bit older: HE WAS DEAD!

After the dreadful reception of LEATHERFACE (deservedly so), the makers of RETURN are continuing as though that film never happened. Though they get a merit badge for trying to fix the damage done to the series, this overhaul emphasizes the lack of care with which the sequels have been handled.

The massacre began with Hooper himself, in THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART 2. Hooper directed and produced from a script by L.M. Kit Carson. The film had some



Leatherface, the franchise's marquee character

good moments and picked up the storyline, with Sally and Franklin's avenging uncle, Lieutenant Enright (Dennis Hopper), hunting down the macabre clan, eventually leading to a chainsaw-wielding duel with Leatherface. But something was lacking.

CHAINSAW 2 also begat a series of discrepancies that would plague LEATHERFACE. In the prologue scroll to CHAINSAW 2, we are told that it has been 13 years since the original massacre. In the actual film, the span of time called 14 years. A caption on the poster reads: "After ten years of silence, the 'buzz' is back."

WAIT! I'm getting dizzy.

In the prologue scroll to the original CHAINSAW, we are told that Marilyn Burns' character is named Sally Hardesty. CHAINSAW 2's scroll identifies her as Sally Hardesty Enright—apparently so the audience can make the connection that Lieutenant Enright and Sally are related. This insane form of logic is indigenous to the CHAINSAW sequels. The filmmakers constantly paint themselves into corners and then come up with even worse means of bailing themselves out.

The prologue scroll to LEATHERFACE says that Sally Hardesty (not Enright) died in a private health care facility in 1977. Yet in CHAINSAW 2's

Renee Zellweger and Matthew McConaughey as co-ed and cannibal.





(played this time by Robert Jacks), returns for another round of chainsaw mayhem.

scroll, we are told that after reaching safety and telling her tale, she sank into catatonia.

We also are informed in the scroll to *LEATHERFACE*, that W.E. Sawyer, the only surviving member of the family, died in the gas chamber in 1981. In *CHAINSAW 2*'s scroll, we are told that after the original massacre, no farm house or family was found, and on the records the "chainsaw massacre" officially never happened. Then there is the name W.E. Sawyer. Until *LEATHERFACE*, no such character existed. We can only assume it is the character played by Jim Siedow, who was the only family member to survive the original *CHAINSAW*, aside from Leatherface—who we are told was never apprehended. However, his name in *CHAINSAW 2* was Drayton Sawyer, though he was still billed as The Cook in the credits.

Now, I know what you're thinking. What about Grandpa? *He* survived. In the prologue scroll to *LEATHERFACE*, we are told that the police believe not that Leatherface really existed but that he was a dual personality Sawyer activated whenever he donned a crude mask made out of human flesh. Now we all know Gramps was too old to be Leatherface—he could barely lift a mallet. But then, with the thinking behind *LEATHERFACE*, anything's

possible.

But assuming that W.E. and Drayton Sawyer are the same, one has to admire him—to die in the gas chamber in 1981 and yet still be alive to preside over the family in 1986, when *CHAINSAW 2* took place! It's kind of like an episode of *QUANTUM LEAP*, isn't it?

What seems most absurd about this is that the makers of *LEATHERFACE* actually went to the trouble of pushing the envelope of credibility by having Siedow's character survive *CHAINSAW 2*, in which the Cook drops a grenade after being caught in the crossfire of Enright and Leatherface's chainsaw duel. Though the explosion is heard off-camera, appearing only as a cloud of smoke in the background of another scene, we are obviously expected to believe that Enright, Leatherface, and the Cook were killed.

And then they kill him off in the prologue?

Next, we are introduced to Tex (Viggo Mortensen), who looks more like a pretty boy gigolo-drifter than a member of a family that lives by the saw; Tinker (Joe Unger), the one-armed man of Texas, who gives the appearance of a guy who *might* cause a brawl at the local bar if he's had a few too many; Mama (Miriam Byrd-Nethery), a wheelchair-bound, flesh-eating Ma Kettle, who seems to

have taken Siedow's place as the head-of-the family; Alfado (Tom Everett), who bears a striking resemblance (in manner) to an older, bearded, camera-toting hitchhiker character. And then there's a little girl (Jennifer Banko), whose name and origin are unspecified, though it is hinted at that she might be an offspring of ol' frisky L.F.

And now the question: **WHO THE HELL ARE THESE PEOPLE?** Are we supposed to believe that Leatherface, now orphaned, adopted this new family as his own? Or, perhaps, it was the other way around?

Actually, at no time during the film does any family member refer to him as Leatherface. He is constantly called "Junior." In fact, Leatherface (played by R.A. Mihailoff), *does* seem, by his manner and overall body language, to be younger. Maybe they should have called it *SON OF LEATHERFACE*. But, nahhh, that would have been stupid.

So, considering what has gone before, one has to wonder whether Kim Henkel's return will be enough? Or has his return come too late, as did Sean S. Cunningham's to the *FRI-DAY THE 13TH* series? Will *RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* return to that original knuckle-whitening, nerve-shattering terror? All I can say is: gas up your chainsaws, get your Leatherface T-shirt's out of mothballs, sit back and wait. □

Director Kim Henkel revs up the chainsaw, again.

By Steve Biodrowski

"My partner, Bob Kuhn, bullied me into doing it, to tell you the truth—particularly the directing, which I was not very comfortable in doing," said Kim Henkel of *RETURN OF THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*. "I was very comfortable working with the cast, but all the action and that stuff was something I didn't particularly feel good about. I had the good fortune of having a great cinematographer, Levie Isaacks, who shot *CHILDREN OF THE CORN II*. I would have been in real trouble without him."

Of the problems with the previous sequels, he said, "I think things like *CHAINSAW* and many others—I don't exclusively mean horror films—become part of a franchise, a factory product, and are subject to all of the governing elements that any factory project is subject to. There are decisions based on a whole lot of criteria that really don't look at what are the elements that make something effective. It tries to imitate a form, rather than coming from something personal."

The fourth *CHAINSAW* effectively marks his return to the series, although he did receive credit on New Line's *LEATHERFACE*. "That was within the agreement about the script," he explained. "Prior to the first draft, I sat down with them, and it became apparent in two or three minutes that they had decided exactly what they were going to do, and I was there for them to meet the letter of the law. That was it."

What could he bring to this film to re-energize the series? "I felt it was the characters, principally. I think that's the strength of this one. In many respects, structurally, it's almost a remake, but it's not literally, because the characters are different—better fleshed out and more realistic, whereas in the original they were rather buf-

continued on page 61

Fed up with bad sequels, it's time to add a little lead to the cannibals' diet.



Ian Fleming's James Bond

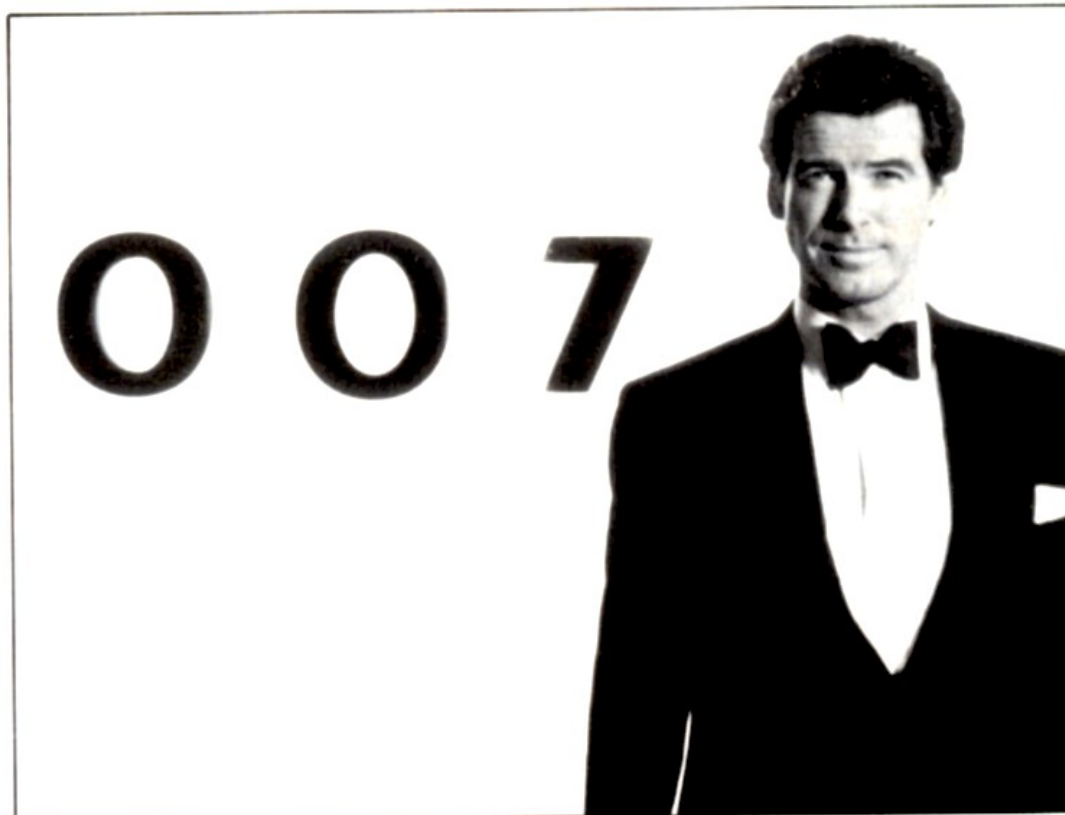
007  returns in...

Pierce Brosnan renews the secret agent's license to kill.

John Barry said no to composing the score. The Rolling Stones said no to singing the theme song. But Pierce Brosnan finally said yes to the role that would have made him a household name years before, had he been able to extricate himself from a contract binding him to the hit TV show REMINGTON STEELE. Instead Timothy Dalton joined her Majesty's secret service as agent James Bond in LICENSE TO KILL and THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS. But Dalton was never happy taking on the 007 assignment; and, as it turned out, neither were audiences. Although Dalton was contracted for one more Bond, both he and Eon Productions (Albert Broccoli's company) decided to call it a day by mutual agreement.

Enter Pierce Brosnan, fresh from his success in THE LAWNMOWER MAN and MRS. DOUBTFIRE, who takes on the Bond mantle six years after the high fantasy action franchise ground to a screeching halt at the world's box offices. With an original story written by Michael France and Jeffrey Caine centered on the Russian mafia and the illegal international weapons market, 41-year-old Brosnan is being viewed as the saviour of the all-new super spy saga and MGM/UA's investment of \$50 million in GOLDENEYE. It's a responsibility the Irish actor isn't taking lightly. He says, "What you're

BROSNAN IN BONDAGE:
"I would love to make the role my own and be responsible for revving up the Bond engine internationally. It would be great if I could make him a world-beater again."



"You were expecting someone else?" queries Brosnan in the film's trailer, wittily acknowledging his status as the newest face in a well-remembered role.

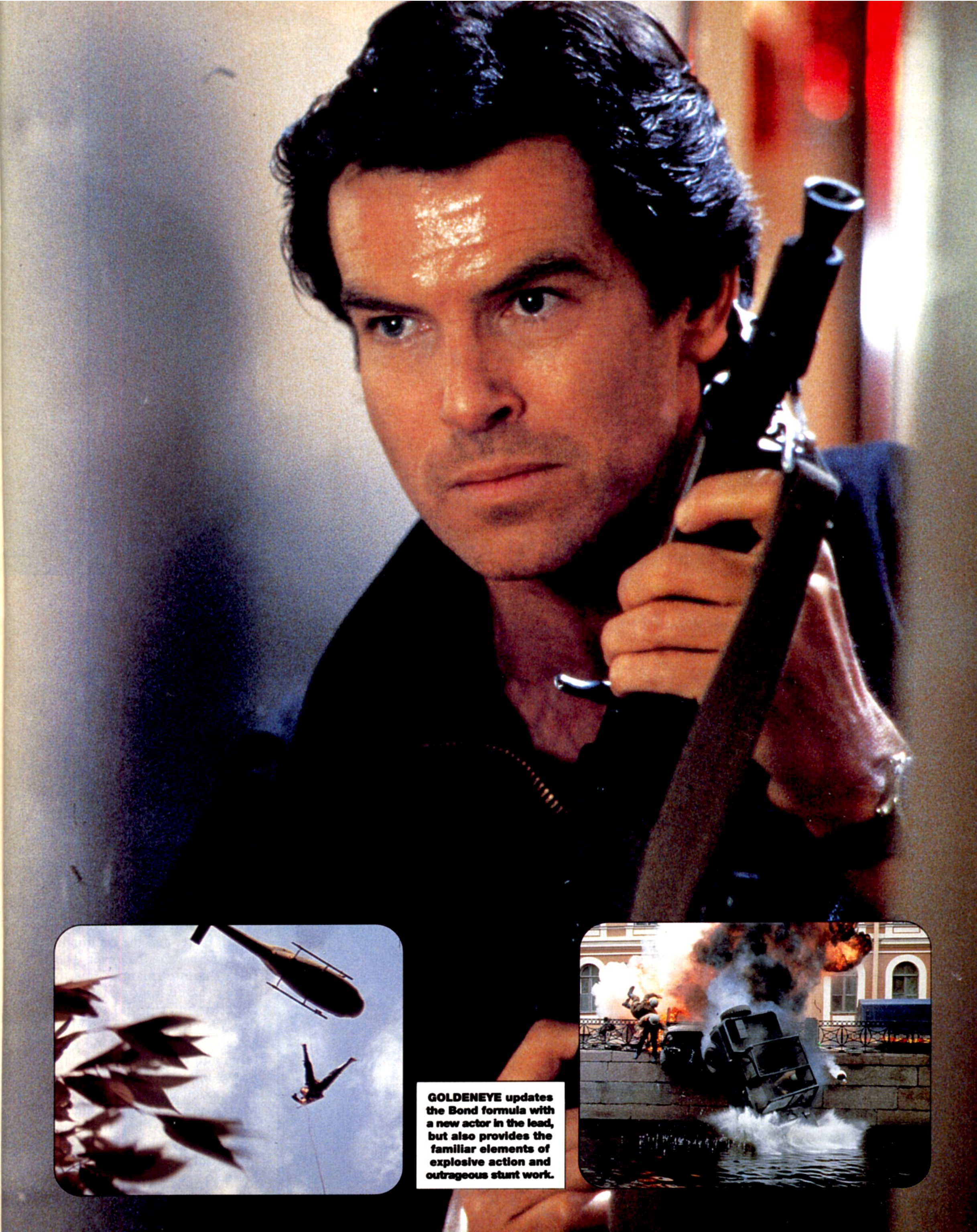
dealing with here in essence is a highly trained Commander who leads a charmed life. The art comes with trying to make those coincidences believable. So I'm keeping my take on Bond as direct, simple, and honest as possible. Of course, I'm bringing in the ingredients that are already there which the audience is familiar with. What they want to

see is it all done with wit and style. Otherwise, you are just left with this superman who always wins no matter what type of derring-do he turns his attention to."

Brosnan admits to being intimidated by following in the footsteps of Sean Connery, Roger Moore, George Lazenby and Dalton. "Some days I do

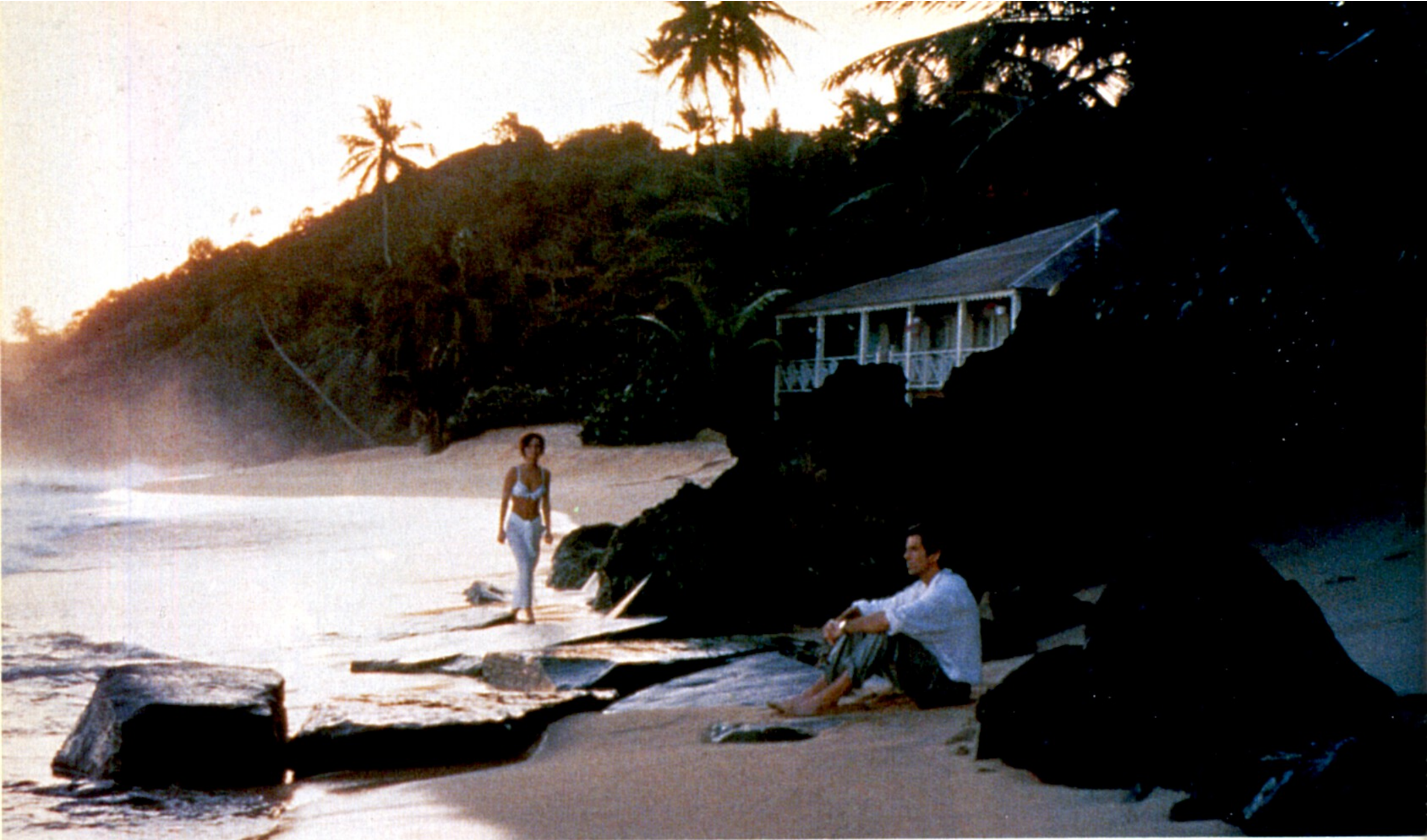
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by Alan Jones



GOLDENEYE updates the Bond formula with a new actor in the lead, but also provides the familiar elements of explosive action and outrageous stunt work.





After a six-year wait since **LICENSE TO KILL**, **GOLDENEYE** revives the classic Bond formula, providing the requisite exotic locations and attractive women.

look over any shoulder, yes.... But I also feel sure and confident of myself within the role, too. There is an element of being up on the high wire with matching high expectations. Bond fans want to see him up there on a pedestal. You don't want to disappoint anyone or screw it up. I do feel under pressure, but you might just as well shoot yourself in the foot if you give in to it. I take each day as it comes and take the work as it comes. I've read the script; I've read all the original Ian Fleming books, and I've watched every one of the movies numerous times. You've probably got as good an idea as I have about what I have to do. There's no point in turning a corner before it's even there."

That's why Brosnan says he won't look at any of the **GOLDENEYE** rushes the day after he's filmed them. "I have a certain image and sense of what I'm doing, and I don't want to be deflected from it," he explains. "I'd be lying if I said I didn't experience gut-wrenching fear every now and again at some moment in the day. But,

hey, it passes. I often think, 'Jesus what did I say yes to when I took on the Bond role.' I thought that most strongly after the first press conference we did. It was a media frenzy like nothing I've ever seen before. I was introduced on that stage and felt my life changing forever with each step. It's quite a shock to the system. One day you're an ordinary actor; the next you're an institution. Bond isn't just a role; it's a way of

life, and that's what you have to get used to."

Would he have been ready for the role had he been able to accept it when Roger Moore retired? "Who knows? Somehow, I don't think so. But what actor could ever have had such a fateful set of circumstances? I had to accept Bond the second time I was offered it. I couldn't have said no. It was like unfinished business in my life. It was meant to be in a way, and that's

why I feel good doing it. Aside from the stress it's colossal fun. That's all you really have as an actor—the process—and hopefully audiences will like what you do with it."

If Brosnan is taking a leaf out of any prior Bond's book, it's Sean Connery's reading of the 007 role. "I'm playing Bond with irony, of course," he says. "That's what made it work the first time around. And if it's done well, there's an audience out there for it. When I first read the script I thought, 'How strange that in 1995 we'd still send an agent into Russia. Well, Russia is still there; corruption is still there, and the criminals are more savage than ever. The fall of communism seems to have created a more sadistic edge to the criminal residue that's been left behind. There are still the typical Bond villains and characters you can weave into the grand elements of an action adventure story. If I wasn't sure of the whole enterprise going in, I certainly am now that we're doing it.'"

Part of the reason Brosnan feels so secure within the re-

Brosnan's Bond receives yet another in a long line of gadgets from Q-division, courtesy of Desmond Llewelyn, who is one of the few familiar faces in cast.



BROSNAN ON BOND:

“He still beds the women, and you never see him wear a condom. He still has his vodka martini and hasn’t checked into A.A. It isn’t politically correct, and hooray for that.”

modeled Bond universe is because director Martin Campbell is at the helm. “GOLDENEYE means as much to Martin as it does to me,” he says. “It’s important we both get it right. We both want to put Bond back on the map. Martin is definite and precise, and he knows exactly what he wants. He’s not holding back and this film really moves. I don’t think the camera remains static at any given point. I think they chose Martin because he knows how to tell a story in style. He’s extremely good with actors too. I have to say I’m very pleased to be surrounded by actors of the calibre of Dame Judi Bench, Alan Cumming, Sean Bean, Joe Don Baker, and Tchéky Karyo. Martin has told us all to play it for real and not be tongue-in-cheek. Sure there’s a little shake here and a stir there. It is a Bond movie after all. But we’re not sending anything up.”

And because it’s a Bond movie, 007 does still have an eye for the ladies, in particular the two GOLDENEYE girls, Xenia Onatopp (Famke Janssen) and Natalya Fyodorovna Simonova (Izabella Scorupco). According to Brosnan, Bond “still beds them, and you never see him wear a condom. He still has his vodka martini, and he hasn’t checked into Alcoholics Anonymous. The way Famke kills her victims by crushing them between her thighs during sex is pretty wicked. No, it isn’t politically correct, and hooray for that. They should up the rating on the Bond movies now so we can get more dirty, gritty and ballsy. That’s my take on it anyway.”

There have been many fine movies in Brosnan’s checkered past: *NOMADS*, *LOVE AFFAIR*, *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY*, and *THE FOURTH PROTOCOL* (the latter two lit by GOLDENEYE director of

photography Phil Meheux), but Bond is his biggest assignment ever. “It’s wonderful to be able to free-fall into the arms of a production you can trust, one which leaves you to get on with your work,” he admits. “I do feel cocooned from the rest of the world on it. The best aspect of GOLDENEYE for me is the new Leavesden Studio complex specifically fitted out and opened for this film. We’ve created our own environment in this ex-Rolls Royce aircraft factory, and there’s no ghosts for me to have to contend with. No Sean, no Roger roaming the corridors. If we were back in Pinewood Studios, everyone in the commissary would be nudging and pointing at me saying, ‘There’s the new Bond.’ I’ve had to face none of that at Leavesden.”

But what’s in it for Pierce Brosnan the actor? Is playing James Bond the end of his proper acting career as he knows it? He remarked, “The pay is fantastic for one thing, and that alone could make it all worthwhile. I would love to make the role my own, and I would love to be responsible for revving up the Bond engine internationally again. Bond is a homegrown British product, and it would be great if I could make him a worldbeater again. There’s also the selfish ingredient too. I’m emotionally attached to the piece because it has played a huge role in my life. It meant so much to my late wife [Cassandra Harris, who appeared in *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY*], who loved the excitement of it all, the roller-coaster ride it would have represented. I would love to get it right for that reason and let it be successful so it could springboard me into other career areas. I do want to produce in a quiet way and tell some other stories outside of Bond.” □



Brosnan in action—a hard-edged Bond, a la Connery: “They should up the rating on the movies now, so we can get more dirty, gritty, and ballsy.”



GOLDENEYE

007

BOND VILLAINS

*Alan Cumming
& Sean Bean.*

The best Bond films have often relied on memorable villains as a hook. As if hedging its bets, GOLDENEYE offers a pair of them: Sean Bean becomes the latest in the distinguished list of Bond adversaries with the role of rogue agent 006, Alexander Trevelyan; and rising British star Alan Cumming plays Boris Ivanovich Greshenko, an edgy, imperious computer wizard who works at Severnaya Station, a secret underground installation housing Russia's Space Weapons Research Centre.

Cumming is a well-known theater actor who has won numerous nominations and awards for his work on stage in *Cabaret* and *La Bete* and on film in *BLACK BEAUTY* and *CIRCLE OF FRIENDS*. The Scottish-born actor co-wrote and starred in the recent hit sitcom *THE HIGH LIFE* centered around two airline stewards. "I'm in GOLDENEYE because it seemed quite a laugh," remarks Cumming, whose irreverence is well-known in the industry. "I got invited to meet the Bond producers—it's something of an honor, so I'm told—and they were quite grand about everything and then they offered me the part of Boris. It's a nice part, a funny part. I'm the brains of the baddies, really, I suppose. I spend lots of time sitting at computer terminals and shouting in a Russian accent. I was into the idea of doing an easy job with loads of time off in between shots and that's the main reason why I wanted to do it. Oh, I should say, it's also a dream come true to be part of Bond history. Is it a good career move? People keep telling me it is but I don't care. I just think it's a hoot to be in a Bond movie. I'm not an avid fan of the series, but I must

admit the first day I walked onto the computer room set I was bowled over by the sheer size and scale. God, it's just like a Bond movie set, I thought to myself. And of course, it was!

"I've quite liked being regarded as this low rent celebrity person," he continues. "It's good being made a fuss of and being treated well. I thought it would be very surreptitious and 'Psst, come to this secret studio address to work.' But it's turned out to be just like any other film job really. I didn't become an actor to keep doing the same old thing, so it's nice to be Boris to break out of that nice guy mould."

Considered something of a sex symbol in Britain due to his gatekeeper nude scenes in Ken Russell's TV serialization of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, the Sheffield-born Bean's film roles include *THE FIELD*, *STORMY MONDAY*, *CARAVAGGIO*, *WINDPRINTS*, and *BLACK BEAUTY*. Abroad he is well known for playing the obsessed IRA terrorist opposite Harri-

son Ford in *PATRIOT GAMES*.

"006 is a very professional self-confident man who knows his job and knows what he's doing," explains Bean. "He's had a successful partnership with Bond and both are very loyal to each other—at first. We have one scene together which is 20 minutes of non-stop action. It goes on forever and I'll try to do many of the stunts myself."

The scene being shot when I grabbed Bean for a few minutes was him avoiding rolling canisters in the Soviet Nerve Gas Facility carved out of solid rock below a huge dam in impenetrable mountain terrain. "We've fooled the guards, and got inside, and just as we are about to fix the detonators we've been discovered. A helluva lot of prep work has gone into this sequence to make it work, and it's quite exciting to fly through the air. I talked to Martin Campbell before starting on the picture and found him meticulous. He's someone who knows what he wants and goes on until he gets it. It's nice to work with someone who cares

Top left: Sean Bean as rogue 006 agent Alexander Trevelyan. Top right: Alan Cumming as computer wizard Boris Greshenko. Below: In the action-packed opening of the film, Bond is teamed up with Trevelyan before he turns rogue.



that much and who is bringing a vital immediacy to it. There's a good energy about the film. It's fast moving with a great script and will be neat for all the fans who haven't had their Bond fix for the last six years.

"Pierce is the perfect James Bond," Bean concludes. "Everything is there: the heroic good looks, the man of action. I liked Sean Connery for his masculinity and presence in *DR. NO* and *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*, and I think Pierce has that same quality."

Cumming seems to concur with Bean's opinion, saying he thinks the script is self-consciously '90s and reasonably witty. "It's a dusted down image of Bond and what he stands for. It's full of the usual big explosions, girls, mad people hacking into computers, and girls. But it doesn't take itself too seriously, and its tongue is firmly wedged in its cheek. I loved being part of the whole press launch. I felt like a beauty queen contestant parading in front of the press. I was Princess Diana for a day! All the outside trappings have been more exciting than the actual work itself which is hardly the most demanding role ever. Yet you do keep up your momentum and the energy level due to the sheer outrageousness of it."

Cumming's catch phrase in GOLDENEYE is "borscht for brains." It was a line that the American side kept wanting to change to "Cabbage brains" because they felt Middle America wouldn't understand what borscht was. "Naturally, I changed it back without delay. I also keep saying 'I am invincible.' I say that just before I die. I have the cachet of being the last person to die before Bond gets rescued. You think everyone's dead, and I suddenly pop up and say, 'I am invincible.' Then an explosion occurs, computer

GOLDENEYE

007

RECREATING BOND FOR THE '90S

Can Brosnan do it better?

By Steven Jay Rubin

When Pierce Brosnan steps through the white dots of the James Bond logo this Fall in "GOLDENEYE," he must meet a number of challenges that will determine his longevity with the 33-year-old film series. Will he have the durability of a Sean Connery or a Roger Moore, both of whom did seven films, or will he be a short-term Bond like Timothy Dalton and George Lazenby? Here's what Brosnan must face:

IS HE "BIG SCREEN?" In other words, does Pierce Brosnan have the persona and charisma to be a big screen motion picture star? James Bond movie stars have always been a terrific one-two punch: he is a larger-than-life character who

Those who doubt Brosnan's credibility as a lethal secret agent need only consult THE FOURTH PROTOCOL (1987)—although he played a KGB villain pursued by Michael Caine's spy-catcher.



Bond's first on-screen punch, in DR. NO, established Sean Connery as a formidable on-screen embodiment of Ian Fleming's aggressive superspy.

must be portrayed by an actor with a larger-than-life persona. Although Sean Connery was a Charlie-nobody in 1962 when he won his 007 spurs, within two years he rose in stature to become one of the most popular actors on Earth. He filled the screen and did what movie stars have been doing for decades—he packed the seats with Sean Connery fans who couldn't wait to see what he did next as 007.

On the other hand, Timothy Dalton, a fine actor with a great reputation in

serious international films, lent no star-power to the character. This became increasingly difficult for the studio marketing department, because they realized that people weren't flocking to see a Timothy Dalton movie; they were going to see a Bond movie with what's-his-name.

PREDICTION: Brosnan has definite potential and, like Connery, could be a major movie star in the making. Also helping him is the fact that he spent all those years playing a rogue on REMINGTON STEELE, which is good Bond training. Just ask ex-Saint Roger Moore.

HOW DOES HE HANDLE THE HUMOR? Connery mastered the throw-away line, and audiences laughed with him

coolant falls on top of me and it freezes me to death. Death by Computer! They had to make a model of me for that, and I was covered in plaster apart from my nostrils. I had to stand against a pole. Vaseline was put all over my legs in case any hair got pulled out, and cling film was glued to my nipples. It was the fantasy of all time; three men smearing Plaster of Paris all over me. I want to keep the model because it's so weird seeing yourself like that."

As for director Martin Campbell, Cumming said, "I was an extra on EDGE OF DARKNESS and now I'm working for him properly as a fully fledged STAR. Martin knows what he's doing and is making everything incredibly stylish. He's not making CITIZEN KANE but there's a healthy balance of humor and thrills. He's always saying things to help me with my characterization, The script is so complicated I have to be reminded all the time about what's going on. It's really hard to work out what's happening when. The story is all character-based and revolves around Pierce and Sean Bean's friendship. Martin does have ludicrous temper tantrums on the set though. I think he does them for effect more than mean anything by them. The other day he screamed at the extras, 'For fuck sake, darlings, try and act like real men,' then turned to me and said, 'Very good, Alan, keep it up.' It's all for show."

Cumming believes the producers are on the right track with Pierce Brosnan as Bond. "I really like him. Roger Moore was all eyebrows and Sean Connery was, well, Seanish. But Pierce has captured the Bond nuances very well. You believe him when he turns on the charm and then does the action stuff. He always has a smirk on his face and seems to be making the part his own. I'm not merely toeing the party line here, I genuinely believe he'll be good. I've only got a couple of scenes with him because most of the time he's jumping about."

"Make a Bond movie and see the world," Cumming was told. He laughs, "Unfortunately, I only saw the inside of a bunker set at the Leavesden Studio! Next time I do something like this, I'll make sure my character doesn't just sit at a computer in an underground facility. Everyone else has been to Puerto Rico and Monte Carlo. My scenes they can shoot anywhere. Still, it fits in with my personality. Outwardly, I'm commercial while I feel decidedly obscure inside. What's the one acting challenge I have here? To sweat a lot. But you need a great deal of acting talent to pull that one off."

Alan Jones

(never at him!). Roger played the character much lighter, increasing the humor and getting away with it (for the most part).

Dalton's key weakness was his discomfort with humor, which was in short supply in his films. Bond audiences must have their dose of humor. It's part of the overall effect (which, interestingly, has been well-copied by other films, notably the LETHAL WEAPON series).

PREDICTION: A strong point for Pierce (based on his comfort in the long-running Remington Steele character).

SEX-APPEAL? Remember, women make up half of the Bond audience. I took my own personal survey recently and found that women were extremely attracted to Connery and Moore. But Dalton once again came up short in this category. He's certainly a handsome man, but the women to whom I spoke did not put him in the same class with Moore and Connery. I believe it's a charisma question (remember, he also was unmemorable recently as Rhett Butler in SCARLETT).

PREDICTION: Big win for Brosnan. He's a ladies' man, pure and simple, and women love him. Like Liam Neeson (ROB ROY) and Daniel Day Lewis (LAST OF THE MOHICANS), he has a bit of the rogue in him.

CAN HE THROW A PUNCH? A big question for action fans. When Sean Connery threw his first punch in DR. NO (remember the "chauffeur" from Government House), his victim was knocked silly. Connery was a big man and quite formidable on screen, the embodiment of producer Albert R. Broccoli's edict that Bond should be a "ballsy, two-fisted secret agent." Just a stare from him, and enemies would take a step back. This was one of Roger Moore's shortcomings in the series—his fighting was adequate but never entirely believable. He was more adept at using witticisms to get out of scrapes than his fists. Dalton was okay in this department, but not enough to overcome his other problems.

PREDICTION: I'll have to wait for Brosnan's first punch,

BROS NAN AS BOND

Brosnan goes into GOLDENEYE as a favorite to carry the long-running series to a new plateau of popularity. Will he succeed? It depends on how good the movie is.



Fighting ability was one of Roger Moore's shortcomings in the role. More adept at humor, he was never as formidable a presence as Connery.

which could be telling. Physically, he's not as formidable as Connery; but then again, who is?

AGE? Moore had to hang up his 007 license because of age (he chuckles and says today that he'd love to play Bond's dad). Sean could still pull it off at 65, but he's not about to. Dalton was the right age.

PREDICTION: Brosnan is also the perfect age. In fact, he's lost the "pretty boy" innocence of his early years, and now has the mature quality that the Bond producers have always liked. Producer Broccoli never liked the "pretty boy;" hence he passed on Roger Moore early in his career.

Overall, Pierce Brosnan goes into GOLDENEYE as a favorite to carry the long-running Bond series to a new plateau of popularity. Will he succeed? It will depend on how

good a movie GOLDENEYE is. The Bond series cannot afford another forgettable film. How long has it been since there's been a good James Bond entry? If you discount LICENSE TO KILL which performed underwhelmingly in the U.S. market in 1989, you have to go back to THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS in 1987. That's eight years ago. So, we hope the new 007 adventure is a good one, because combining a good movie with Brosnan will be a winner. And then, of course, the sky is the limit. Pierce could be playing Bond well into the 21st century. □

(Steven Jay Rubin is the author of *The Complete James Bond Movie Encyclopedia* which is being updated this fall to include GOLDENEYE. A CD-ROM based on that book is currently in production from Villa Crespo Software of Highland Park, Illinois.)

007

BEST OF BOND

A countdown of the secret agent's on-screen adventures

ranked by
Steven Jay Rubin

1. GOLDFINGER ★★★★★

The perfect Bond movie stands the test of time—the quotable script still gets big laughs. Great set pieces, terrific balance of danger and comedy. Gert Frobe's Auric Goldfinger is the best Bond villain, and Honor Blackman's Pussy Galore is a scene-stealer. Battle with Oddjob in Fort Knox is a knockout.

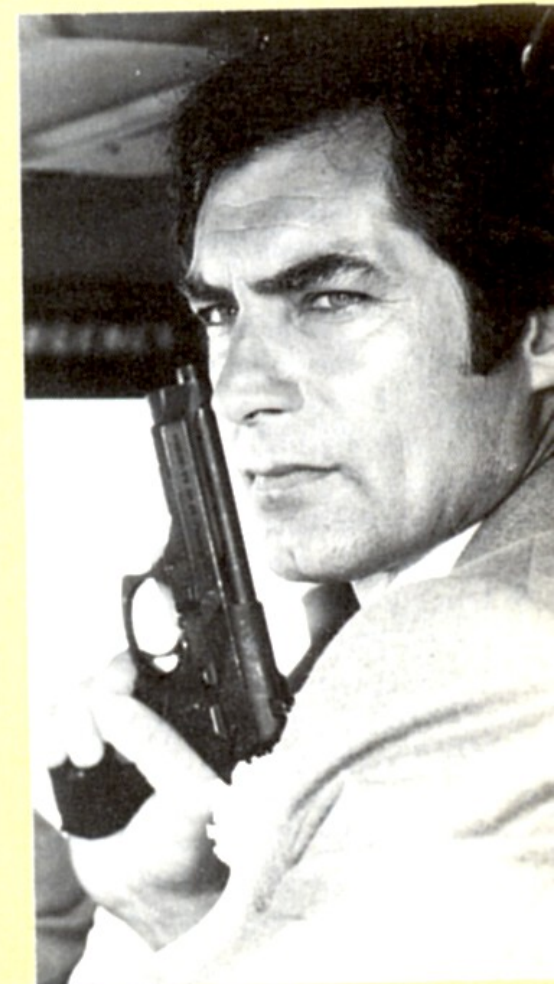
2. FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE ★★★★★

The most serious Bond film has best script. Connery was never better. Daniela Bianchi makes a fetching female spy. A great gallery of villains—Lotte Lenya, Robert Shaw, Vladek Sheybal—plot to humiliate 007 on the Orient Express. Pedro Armendariz's last movie: his Kerim Bey is one of the series' best realized characters. Top John Barry score.

3. ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE ★★★★★

Although an able replacement, George Lazenby was no Connery; still, this is still one of the best in the series—the closest to Fleming's novel. Great romantic relationship between 007 and Diana Rigg's Tracy leads to the short-lived

Despite a lean and mean approach befitting the characterization, Timothy Dalton never caught on.





Moore's interpretation of the character finally clicked into place with **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**.

marriage. Peter Hunt's direction is slam-bang and the 2:20 running time flies by. John Barry's best score.

4. THE SPY WHO LOVED ME ★★★

The film that revived the series' fortunes in 1977, this is Roger Moore's best Bond by far, with memorable set pieces, classy Marvin Hamlisch music, and a great Carly Simon title tune. Barbara Bach is one of the series' best female leads, matching 007 move for move. Comical Jaws character (Richard Kiel) won Bond a legion of new fans. The spectacular battle sequence on a giant super tanker is legendary.

5. THUNDERBALL ★★★1/2

Epic Bond entry pushed series to its peak of popularity in 1965. S.P.E.C.T.R.E. plot to steal A-bombs is clever and well-executed on screen. Claudine Auger—the sexiest woman in the series—makes this the most romantic film, with perfect settings in Nassau. Luciana Paluzzi's Fiona is a terrific cold-hearted villainess. Only wrinkles are repetitious underwater sequences, though John Barry's lush score helps them considerably. Rik Van Nutter is the best Felix Leither.

6. DR NO ★★★1/2

First Bond film is a great introduction to the character. Connery's debut is understated, and the movie plays like a 1950s' detective story with 1960s comic book flavor. Joseph Wiseman is the perfect Dr. No, and Ursula Andress' bikini-clad appearance is highly memorable. Terence Young's direction set the style for the series. The "James Bond Theme" debuts here, performed by John Barry's orchestra, although composing credit goes to Monty Norman.

7. OCTOPUSSY ★★★1/2

Under-rated Roger Moore film boasts series' highest rental figure.

Terrific atmosphere in East Germany gets this epic entry off to a fantastic start, and pace never flags. Even though many sequences in India have a madcap style, everything else works, and Bond's disarming of the A-bomb while dressed as a clown is a highlight of the series. Terrific John Barry score.

8. FOR YOUR EYES ONLY ★★★1/2

Another under-rated Moore Bond, this returns to the seriousness of **FROM RUSSIAN WITH LOVE**, with a believable blood feud between Julian Glover's duplicitous Kristatos and Topol's Columbo, great Greek locations and beautiful Carole Bouquet. Bill Conti's score is a step down from John Barry. Opening teaser begins with Bond visiting his wife's grave, then ends idiotically.

9. NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN ★★★

Sean Connery returns for his last Bond adventure. Klaus Maria Brandauer makes a great Largo, and he's in turn upsataged by Barbara Carrera's wicked Fatima Blush. Bernie Casey was a good Felix Leiter. Lack of action hurt this film, and once Blush is done away with, the momentum sags. That, combined with Michel Legrand's uninspired score, hurt the film. Good Herb Albert title tune.

10. YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE ★★★

An epic Bond film hurt by stupid action sequences and lack of real danger. Plot, which was copied a decade later by director Lewis Gilbert in his own **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME** is okay, but Connery is more the automaton in this one, playing with Q's toys rather than battling Blofeld. John Barry score, Mie Hama's Kissy, stunning Japanese locations, and great final battle in the missile complex save this from the scrap heap.

Although George Lazenby is all but forgotten after his single appearance as Bond, **ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE** is one of the better films.



11. DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER ★★★

Fun if uninspired. Jill St. John steals the show as Tiffany Case, and Las Vegas is the perfect Bond location—larger than life, just like the series. Connery is comfortable in the role (returning after **ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE**), and Tom Mankiewicz adds zesty dialogue. Bruce Glover and Putter Smith steal scenes as gay assassins Mr. Wint and Mr. Kidd.

12. THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS ★★★1/2

Timothy Dalton's first of two Bonds was flashy enough to make one overlook how bland he was. The villains steal the film: Jeroen Krabbe as Koskov, Alex Wisniewski as Necros, and Joe Don Baker as Brad Whitaker. Good John Barry score. Lousy drug caper presaged even lousier **LICENCE TO KILL** plot.

13. LIVE AND LET DIE ★★★1/2

Roger Moore's Bond debut is okay, and Paul McCartney's title tune is a stand out, but the film bumps and grinds to its conclusion with too much comic book flavor. The beginning of the end of Bond's secretive spy persona; from now on, he was Mr. Celebrity Spy.

14. LICENCE TO KILL ★★

Dalton's swan song as Bond nearly sank the series. Dull plot was too **MIAMI VICE** for most fans, lacking tongue-in-cheek action and memorable set pieces. Few highlights include Carey Lowell's marvelous Pam Bouvier and Robert Davi's suave Sanchez. The film lacked nearly every quality that has made Bond endure: adventure, humour, romance, and fun.

15. THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN ★★

Moore's second Bond is a total comic book romp without an ounce



Connery may be the best Bond, but not all of his films are the best: e.g., **DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER**.

of reality. Granted, the film features some terrific secondary characters (e.g., Herve Villechaize's Nick Nack), but the key battle between Moore and Christopher Lee has little suspense. Reason: Lee is too likable as Scaramanga. Only the beautiful Thai locations and the Barry score were memorable.

16. MOONRAKER ★★

Another Bond film without an ounce of reality, this was a huge hit mainly because of the post-**STAR WARS** plot and the return of the goofy Jaws character, played by Kiel. Otherwise, the movie has few memorable scenes. Only the music, Bond's fling in the centrifuge, and Corinne Clery's helicopter pilot ring true. Final assault on Drax's space station is a standard issue Buck Rogers' fare, and 007's ride in an inflatable gondola is a low point for the series.

17. A VIEW TO A KILL ★

Another Bond bomb. Ending the ice-bound teaser sequence with Beach Boys music was the first clue that the series was coming unglued. The hook and ladder chase in San Francisco belonged in a Keystone Cops movie, and most of the action sequences were clunkers. A few good moments in the Main Strike mine and the music were again the only plusses in this, the worst film in the United Artists' Bond series.

18. CASINO ROYALE ★

Let's just say that when producer Charles K. Feldman realized he couldn't get Sean Connery for his Bond movie, he should have sold the rights back to the Fleming estate and gone fishing. Instead, he assembled an enormous creative team, spent a lot of Columbia Pictures' money, and created one of the worst films of the '60s. A curiosity today that still doesn't deliver, this is the film with Woody Allen as Bond's scene-stealing nephew, Jimmy, who wolfs down an A-bomb pill. Good Herb Alpert score. □

GOLDENEYE

007

DIRECTING BOND

Martin Campbell pumps up the volume.

By Alan Jones

At the end of an intense shooting schedule on GOLDENEYE, director Martin Campbell still has 25 weeks of post-production to get his revisionist Bond movie exactly right. High on the priority agenda is the climax, which combines extensive CGI digital effects and blue screen work to portray Bond and the mysterious Janus battling it out on top of a radio transmitter in Puerto Rico. Early reports indicate that United Artists is thrilled by their first test screening (in Wimbledon, South London, July 19), and those privy to the screening say it's the non-stop camera movement and the hard-edged action that separate this Bond from its predecessors.

"Action movies have been redefined in past decades, and the stakes have been upped dramatically, what with TRUE LIES and the DIE HARDs," Campbell remarks. "Audience sensibilities have been fine tuned, too, which is why this Bond is much faster and grittier. The action stuff is terrific, even though I say it myself."

Born in New Zealand, 48-year-old Martin Campbell moved to London in 1966 to begin his industry career as a video cameraman. He line produced low-budget features and directed the soft core sex film ESKIMO NELL (starring MARK OF THE DEVIL director Michael Armstrong) before making his television directing debut with the police action se-

BEYOND BOND

"There's a lot more character and insight in GOLDENEYE. It goes way beyond your average Bond movie. That's why I haven't been daunted by the whole project."



On the set of the Monte Carlo casino, Martin Campbell rehearses a scene with Pierce Brosnan and Famke Janssen (as femme fatale Xenia Onatopp).

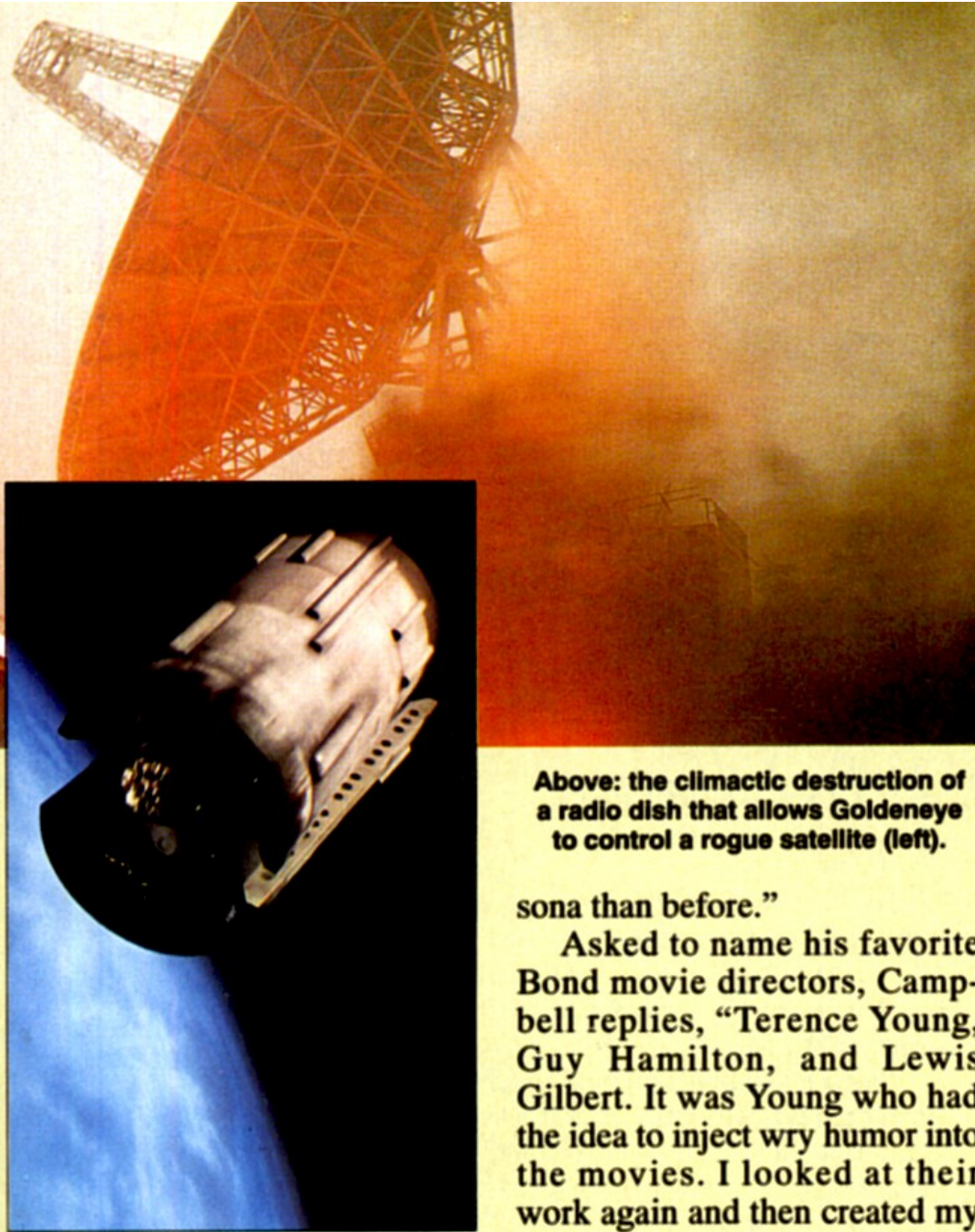
ries THE PROFESSIONALS (created by THE AVENGERS' Brain Clemens). He received international acclaim for the HBO serial EDGE OF DARKNESS, which led to his Hollywood feature debut with CRIMINAL LAW in 1986, followed by the HBO fantasy CAST A DEADLY SPELL, but it was last year's SF adventure NO ESCAPE which attracted the attention of the Broccoli dynasty, who thought Campbell would be the perfect choice to guide James Bond into the '90s.

"That's the million dollar question," says Campbell. "Every single reporter has asked me how I've managed to do that. My stock reply is, 'What's so great about the '90s?' I've just ensured that Bond is more aware of things than he was before. He knows all about the changing political spectrum, Russia, the Cold War, and so forth, but he's still as sexist as he ever was. Cancelling out his chauvinism would be a mistake. He must remain a womanizer. The only thing he doesn't do

anymore is smoke. Otherwise, he has all the same qualities he's always had and is very much the type of character he was in the past."

Campbell admits, "NO ESCAPE was a kind of no-brainer. It was a huge romp, and the idea was just to make an entertaining action film. GOLDENEYE is more of a brainer than usual because there's a lot more character insight in the script. It goes way beyond your average Bond movie. That's why I haven't really been daunted by the whole project. It's only daunting in the sense that you have to maintain the Bond tradition. My view of the Bond movies is there have been some good and bad ones. I loved the earlier Sean Connery ones, while I didn't like the last two very much at all. They've varied in value a great deal. I don't think I'm consciously trying to be different. Why should I be? Bond has been a huge success for 30 years now, so why should I bugger it up?"

Nevertheless, there have been changes in updating Bond for a CGI literate audience. "We have a slightly chilly Cold War situation, the Eastern Block is still there and the villain this time turns out to be a colleague of Bond's, so I see GOLDENEYE in FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE terms. The main villain is a Robert Shaw to Sean Connery-type of relationship. They're both equals, so that's different. Also the Bond girls are much tougher in this. I think they're a lot more interesting



Above: the climactic destruction of a radio dish that allows Goldeneye to control a rogue satellite (left).

and damn better actresses than the usual ones, so the bimbo element is gone. There's no question that Bond is still the male chauvinist pig he always was, and M points this out quite bluntly in her interview with him. To change that would be a terrible mistake. The fact he's so politically non-correct is really good. It's one of his greatest assets. People like him for that reason. He's very attractive to women. They fall in love with him; they go to bed with him—no apologies. There's some pretty sexy stuff in this, all within the context of the PG-13 rating."

The most radical change Campbell has made is in the character of M. Two years ago the British Government appointed the first female head of the Secret Service, and GOLDENEYE reflects that welcome streak of non-sexism. "M is played by Dame Judi Bench, who has a very different viewpoint of the 00 section than Bernard Lee's version did," says Campbell. "She's the most '90s aspect of the movie, because she would be glad if the 00 licenses didn't exist. She thinks they are well past their sell by date in the modern world. Judi's M is more of an analyst and a political per-

sona than before."

Asked to name his favorite Bond movie directors, Campbell replies, "Terence Young, Guy Hamilton, and Lewis Gilbert. It was Young who had the idea to inject wry humor into the movies. I looked at their work again and then created my own, because I direct the way I direct and that's the end of it. I watched the old movies more to see how the character of Bond has developed over the years; just what did those men do with Connery, Moore and Dalton—what I assessed the problems to be, if any. My stamp will be making GOLDENEYE the raciest of the series. I like things to zip along. It's a more modern approach. Audiences these days aren't impressed by slam-bang hi-tech action anymore, either, unless it has the backbone of a good story, and that's what I've accented, too.

"I do think the acting will be a vast improvement over the other Bonds," he continues. "I

"The fact that he's politically non-correct is really good. He's attractive to women. They fall in love with him; they go to bed with him—no apologies."



don't mean Connery or Moore, but in terms of the whole cast. We've gone for great actors across the board, and the quality level will show in the finished product. Okay, you expect good stuff from Judi Bench and Alan Cumming, but our Bond girls are wonderful also. The appalling deliveries some of the girls used to give in the old days often used to be part of the joy of watching Bond. Famke Janssen and Isabella Scorupco aren't Barbie dolls in high heels; they're far more real and intelligent."

As far as Campbell is concerned, the six-year gap between GOLDENEYE and LICENSE TO KILL (due to legal reasons) was a good thing. "That meant they could make changes at the top and give the whole series the new broom treatment: a new director, a new Bond, a new look. That's why I don't think GOLDENEYE is going to be twice the hard sell people are imagining. For instance, the ace in our deck is definitely Pierce Brosnan. For some reason—and I don't profess to know exactly why—there's a terrific groundswell for Pierce to succeed. That's incredible to me, and it took me by surprise a great deal. I relaxed a little after learning that. Timothy Dalton is a fine actor, but the public didn't know him or like him that much. Yet Pierce has generated an amazing kind of enthusiasm from all public sectors that's a gift to this production. I'm not saying that we can rest on our laurels, but Pierce has provoked a great deal of people to say, 'Well, he always was ideal for the part, and this will prove it.' He's a

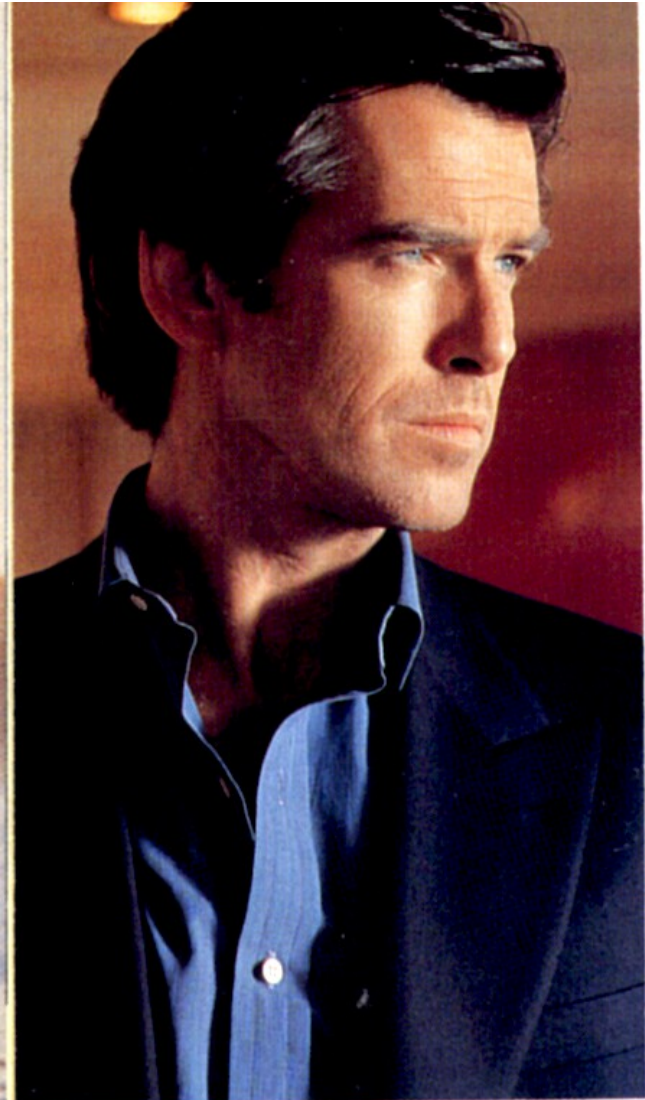


The most obvious new element in the film is a female M, played by Dame Judi Bench.

lucky man to have that support."

How does Brosnan stack up against prior Bonds in Campbell's estimation? "Bond is a caricature almost, because he's such a romantic antihero. I always thought Sean Connery was tremendous, but he never had the class of the man as written by Ian Fleming. Pierce has that class with a capital C and matches it with action ability. Plus, he's tremendously good-looking. He's the traditional Bond we've come to know and love, yet Pierce has brought his own contemporary and personal sides to the character. There's a depth in the GOLDENEYE Bond that I always thought was missing from other entries in the series. Pierce has lifted Bond above the superficial. I just hope audiences go for it as much as we have."

Upon meeting Brosnan for the first time, the director told his star not to relate to any other Bond. "Pierce is a good enough actor, an intelligent enough actor, to be able to put his own stamp on the role," explains Campbell. "You don't have to kill the man's own personality, or what he brings to it himself, because of prior expectations. Pierce has been with the part for a long time now, and it's one that fits him like a glove. He's



"Pushing him to always look cool under pressure," was Campbell's chief direction to Pierce Brosnan.

very underrated as an actor, too. Most people have this TV image of him, which comes with the often mistaken impression that he's always doing second rate material. GOLDENEYE will correct that balance."

In fact, Campbell finds directing Brosnan more about reminding him of the Bond traits than actual text or performance. He points out, "I keep massaging the whole project along by pushing him to always look cool under pressure and always handle the action in a calm and controlled way. Making sure he never looks panicked or flustered is my part in the proceedings. There's always got to be a sense of humor in what he does, and he must keep the smile in his eyes. And when he kills, he kills very hard and fast. It's body language stuff like that which is vitally important to making Bond work."

While Pierce Brosnan has been signed up for the next two Bond adventures, already in the pre-planning stages, Campbell is not saying whether he will direct the next Bond, even though it seems likely, based on the enthusiastic response so far. "There might never be any more after audiences have seen this one!" he laughs. "It's madness thinking about that so far in advance. Who knows how people are going to react?" □

GOLDENEYE 007

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Peter Lamont upholds the Ken Adam tradition.

GOLDENEYE marks Peter Lamont's 15th James Bond film. After beginning his association on GOLDFINGER as a draftsman in the art department, he has worked on every one since, moving from chief draftsman through assistant art director and set decorator. He received an Oscar nomination (with production designer Ken Adam) as art director on THE SPY WHO LOVED ME, and also received one as set decorator on FIDDLER ON THE ROOF. FOR YOUR EYES ONLY was his first Bond film as production designer, a capacity he has also filled on ALIENS and TRUE LIES.

Does Lamont consider himself to be following the tradition established by Ken Adam? "Well, when I started doing Bond, he just did detecting. Now we are involved in more elaborate scenarios. GOLDENEYE has the vintage Bond feel. The environment here at Leavesden has helped; we have lower roofs, for a start.

"Everyone wanted Pierce eight years ago. I'm so pleased we've got him now. The casting on this is the

best we've ever had. The girls aren't bimbos. M's office isn't like it was. We asked to look at MI5's offices, but they didn't allow us to. So it's all based on supposition."

Despite location shooting, much of the more destructive action was completed on the back lot, for practical reasons. "We were aiming to do a lot more in Russia," says Lamont. "We had problems with the environmentalists there. We wanted to race a 36-ton tank around St. Petersburg, and who knew what damage we could do? There was also concern about sewers and water mains being damaged because the tank was so heavy on the streets. Tanks go very slowly on their tracks normally, whereas we wanted them to move fast. At Leavesden we are now building parts of St. Petersburg for a very demanding scene we were going to do in Russia. A street with a post office connecting with another street with a low bridge connects with a scene with a tank with a flying horse. We couldn't possibly do it there, so we built the streets here. In broad strokes, it's very similar to the Russian streets we are going to use on location. So we get the money shots in

Despite extensive location work, destructive rampages like the runaway tank sequence required the building of exterior sets on the studio back lot.



St. Petersburg and intercut them with the tank doing real damage when it careers down an alleyway. That way we can smash down buildings. The tank can now gaily slide around the streets without any trickery. It couldn't have turned fast or properly in Russia itself. The street on the back lot is built from bricks and mortar so it looks authentic.

"Same with a roundabout [merry-go-round] sequence in St Petersburg: Our tank charges across a roundabout in front of a cathedral, collides with a Perrier lorry, goes straight through it, and crashes into a memorial with a winged horse that attaches itself to the top of the tank. The horse eventually falls on the top of some police cars, leaving Bond to break free from the police clutches. We needed to do that under controlled circumstances here, too."

Lamont's crew "often had meet-



Lamont provides the colossal sets that audiences have come to expect (above); plus, they blow up real good, too (right).

ings with the script writers to make sure they knew what we could and couldn't do. There was one point where Trevelyan throws Bond the keys to a helicopter, and General Ourumov (Gottfried John) intercepts them, whereupon the helicopter blows up. Now the girl is put in the helicopter with Bond, and it goes on automatic mode; a clock starts ticking; two air-to-air rockets take off, and they circle in front of the wind screen and come back towards Bond and blow up. How does Bond get out was the problem? So I suggested they make the helicopter have an escape hatch on the top with exploding removable rotor blades. I'd just worked on *TRUE LIES*, and looking at the top of a Harrier cockpit, as you pull the escape for the ejection seat, noticed that before you lift off, the whole cockpit is ex-

posed. So this, plus the rotor blades got written in. It's very democratic working on a Bond movie. Everyone has a say.

"We crossover a lot between departments. It's a big team, and that's how you get through things. Everyone knows what's going on with each other. Martin Campbell and I talk all the time. The most complicated sequence is the end on the 1000-foot diameter parabolic transmitter dish concealed in the Caribbean. (It's this that allows *Goldeneye* to activate the one remaining rogue satellite to paralyze the entire world's communications network). It's 500 feet in the air, and huge. We have a scene where Bond jams the operating gear as the great cradle comes around to get the telescope into the correct sequence orientation. There's a fight in the main-

tenance head above the antenna. In real fact, the antenna is 120 feet long; we've made ours 80 feet long because of the sound stage size being only 30 feet high, which is why we've built it on a horizontal slope. When we shoot it, we'll do it against a photographic translight [a large backlit transparency]. How do we store this bloody ladder that goes down one side, because we can't take it vertically? It sounds like a silly problem, but it's an enormous challenge—embellished with a small maintenance hut, too. Bond comes down the ladder with the villain trying to push him off onto the dish.

"I never over-spent on the budget before and haven't here, either," claims Johnson, although he does admit to facing "one or two problems—like on the nerve gas facility



set at the moment. Pierce had a slight injury, so we couldn't use that set at the time. So we had to bring other sets into operation faster. The main advantage with Leavesden is we have the space to build the sets and not have to strike them. Otherwise, we'd have been in serious trouble. We had the room around us to expand. There is a million and a half square feet here, which we've utilized every inch of.

Alan Jones

Malcolm McDowell on

Floating a few feet above the floor of the smoke filled dojo, Malcolm McDowell, wrapped in a traditional kimono, personified serenity, power, and wisdom. But it was an image he did not allow to linger long. A few days earlier, he had been the sinister Dr. Soran, out to destroy an entire solar system, in *STAR TREK: GENERATIONS*. Next week, he would be in Tucson, filming *TANK GIRL*, as Kesslee, a cartoonish baddie. But, on this day, his 51st birthday, he was sitting on a one-arm lifting rig on the immense soundstages of *THE FIST OF THE NORTH STAR*, portraying Ryuken, the spiritual guide in a post apocalyptic world.

No stranger to *cinéfantastique*, McDowell has some 40 films to his credit, many of them in the genre. He is probably best remembered, by American audiences, for his disturbingly violent characterization of the arrogant gang leader, Alex, in Stanley Kubrick's *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*.

Interestingly enough, McDowell admits that Kubrick's

films don't necessarily touch him emotionally, although he still considers Kubrick an icon in the film business. "Look at *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*," McDowell pointed out, during a break in filming on set of *THE FIST OF THE NORTH STAR*. "Where would George Lucas be without *2001*? It's such a great film; it's one of the classics! On laser disc, it is mind boggling. The thing about Stanley is that I'm not quite sure how much of a humanist he is. If there are any complaints to be had, I think it would be that his films don't move me. And maybe they don't, but in other areas he's brilliant."

After doing *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, McDowell went on to work in a variety of projects: *THE RAGING MOON*, a love story about two disabled people; *O LUCKY MAN*, a film of success and failure; *CALIGULA*, a Penthouse Magazine production of the lurid and violent Roman Empire; and, of course, he turned in a wonderful portrayal of H. G. Wells in *TIME AFTER*

McDowell was a busy actor last year, with three genre films to his credit: his high-profile role as crazed Dr. Soran in *STAR TREK: GENERATIONS* (below) generated career heat, which lead to another villainous turn in *TANK GIRL* (left, with Lori Petty). In between the two, he played a change of pace role as the enlightened mystic Ryuken in *THE FIST OF THE NORTH STAR* (top).



LUCKY MAN!

Profile by
Michael Beeler

his career revival—like, real horrorshow!

“If there are any complaints [about Stanley Kubrick], it is that his films don’t move me. And maybe they don’t, but in other areas he’s brilliant.”

TIME.

But McDowell doesn't seem to want to hold on too tightly to his past, feeling more comfortable talking about his present career resurgence. "Those were powerful roles," he admitted. "But, you know, I was a very young man, a young actor, and now I'm in phase two of my career. It's very exciting for me to be sort of rediscovered by people, and I enjoy that. Although, I don't really look like the same person. I've got white hair now, which I kind of like. It's nice, because when people see me they say, 'My God, you look great!' So, I'm really looking forward to this part of my rebirth. It feels good to me."

McDowell is on *THE FIST OF THE NORTH STAR* set for only one day of filming. Consequently, the producers make every attempt to utilize his talents, as well as his star appeal, while he is there. The result is an unbelievably hectic pace of filming with the crew, speaking with numerous journalists from around the world, and posing with various cast and crew for several portrait photographers.

Eventually, Tony Randel, the director, has McDowell do silent rehearsals in order to save his voice, which is beginning to show signs of strain. Through it all McDowell remains a true gentleman and skilled craftsman—a real professional.

"Well, I like to think that I am a professional," said Mc-

Dowell. "There's a lot of hassle in this business, and we don't need any more from temperamental actors. Anyway it's a waste of energy. Conserve your energy. Focus it into the work. That's very important, and I try to do that, if I can. I never like to get upset on the set or anything like that; it's very rare when I do."

"But, it feels great. You find that most of the people who work on movie sets are usually nice people, and they try to make it very easy for you to do your job. They're instantly friendly. I think they kind of know they have to be that way in order to get a good performance out of people."

Still the rebel, he alluded to fact that his former reputation as a bad boy, both on screen as well as off, serves him well even today. "I'm still a revolutionary in certain ways. In my heart I'll always be a rebel. I think I bring that to the parts I play. I bring an element of danger. Consequently the people on the set are never quite sure about me. But, then sometimes I'm not quite sure myself."

In Robert Altman's *THE PLAYER*, McDowell recreated one real-life experience when he was up front and in the face of a studio executive. In the cameo appearance, McDowell, playing himself, informs stunned studio head Griffen Mill (Tim Robbins), that, "In the future if you have anything



Kubrick directs McDowell and Adrienne Corri in the brutal home invasion scene of the all-too-prophetic masterpiece *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* (1972).

to say about me please have the decency to say it to my face!"

McDowell recalled that he and Altman have "been friends for 25 years. He just called and asked if I would be in his movie, and I said, 'Yes, of course I will, Bob. Anytime you want, naturally.' And, he said, 'We'll come pick you up, do you mind?' And I said, 'No, I'll bring Kelly [his lovely wife] and the dog.' Then, they said, 'Fine. Now do you know any experiences we could use in the film?' I said, 'Well, I know one, a good one, that happened to me.' And, I told him and he said, 'Great let's use it.' So we used the line in the movie, which I actually once stupidly used on somebody, all those years ago. That executive went on to head, I think, three major studios after that. And, of course I never worked in any of them. So, it teaches you to keep your big mouth shut."

"A lot of that movie was true about Hollywood, of course," he continued. "It was a mystery and all of that, but there were some brilliantly honest things in

that play. I think Altman is a rare and gifted American director. I mean if there is an ultrarian director, besides [Martin] Scorsese [*TAXI DRIVER*], it's got to be Robert Altman. He's a very great director."

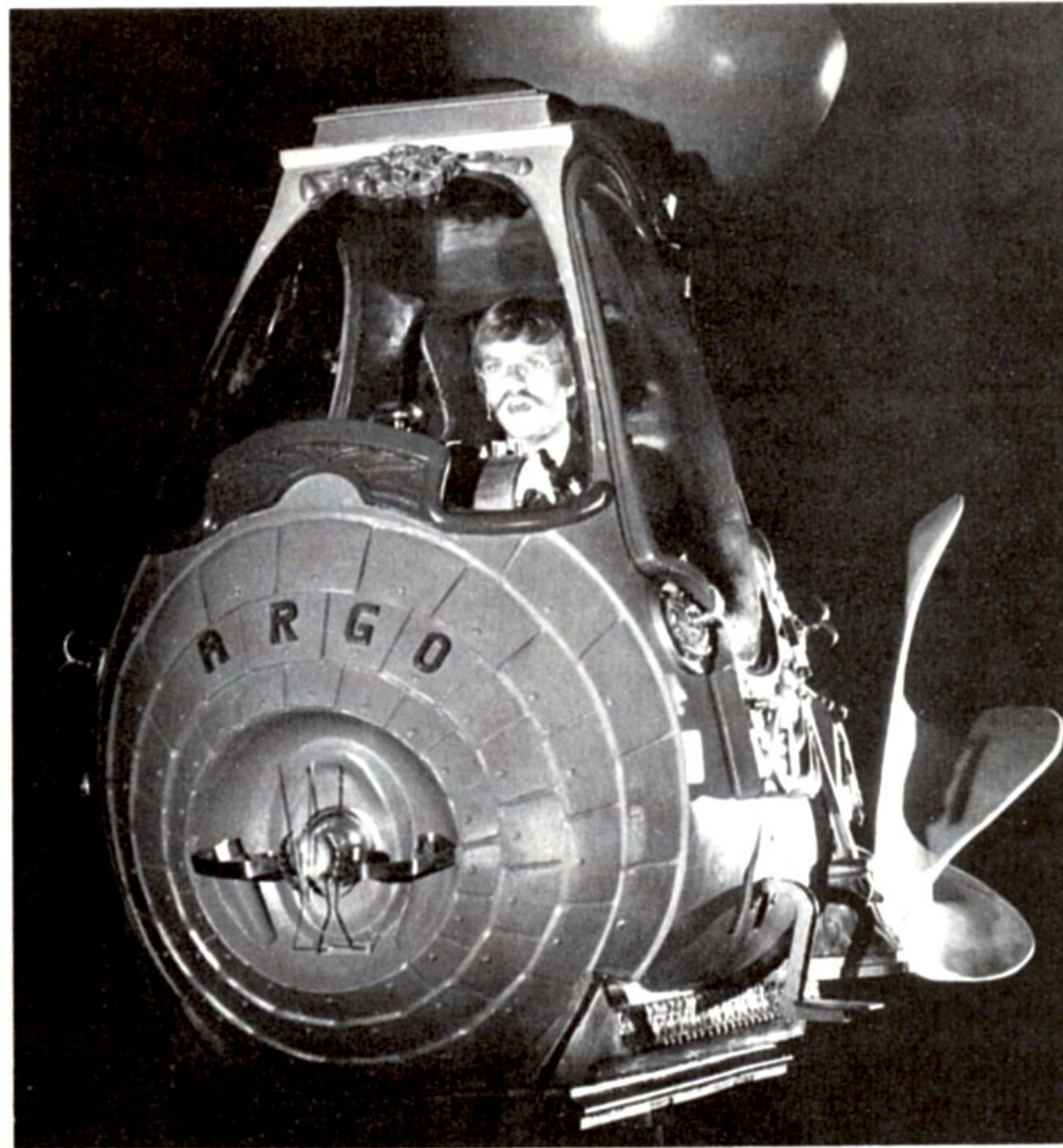
Admitting to figuratively, "sleeping around all over the place career-wise," McDowell has been very busy as of late. Besides recently appearing in *STAR TREK: GENERATIONS*, *MILK MONEY*, *BO-PHA* and the made for TV movie *SEASONS OF THE HEART* he most recently appeared in Rachel Talalay's personal dream project: *TANK GIRL*. "[Talalay] is wonderful, I love her," said McDowell about the invigorating director, who literally worked her way up from making coffee to making films like *FREDDY'S DEAD* and *GHOST IN THE MACHINE*. "It's set in the year 2030, after a meteorite has hit the earth. It takes place in the desert in Australia where the currency is water, and I'm the head of water and power. So I'm the heavy of the piece."

Commenting on the fact that British actors in general often play one or the other extreme in American movies, McDowell explained, "We do often play the good or the bad, God or the devil. It probably has to do with the British accent. Americans think it means class. Actually, it doesn't at all; it just means people can understand you in most languages. It's nice and slow, precise and articulate. But the English do find it rather easy to play those kind of parts because they live in a class-filled society. So it's easy to draw on it."

Looking to the future, McDowell, who originally appeared in the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1965 as a spear carrier, feels his best roles are yet to come. "I suppose one would like to say, 'I'd like to do this, that and the other,'" McDowell said about future projects. "But I won't say that because I've been very lucky to have gotten where I am. And if it doesn't go any further, then I've had enough. I've had a great career. I can't complain. And if that's it, I'd be happy with that. But I have a feeling I have a lot of good work ahead of me. I really do."

"And, if it's not in the cinema, then it will be on stage because all the great parts are written for 50-, 60- and 70-year-old actors, that can still remember their lines. Well, touch wood, because sometimes I don't. But, I think the stage is where the real excitement lies, because it offers a continuity; it's a live audience, you're up there close to people. There's no mistakes; you're right there for two hours. The concentration is terrific. You Zen it in.

"I've been lucky to get where I am. And if it doesn't go any further, then I've had enough. But I have a feeling I have a lot of good work ahead of me."



McDowell plunges into the future, as author H.G. Wells, in Nicholas Meyers' directorial debut, the amusing science-fantasy *TIME AFTER TIME* (1978).

Turn it up. It's such a high. It's so much better than drugs."

He goes on to credit his wife, Sir John Gielgud and his love for his craft for keeping him alive and enthusiastic about what he does each day. "If it wasn't for Kelly, I wouldn't be able to get up in the morning,

and that's the truth," McDowell revealed about his wife, as she sat quietly at his side flipping through a *Cinefantastique* retrospect on the filming of *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*. "She keeps me straight.

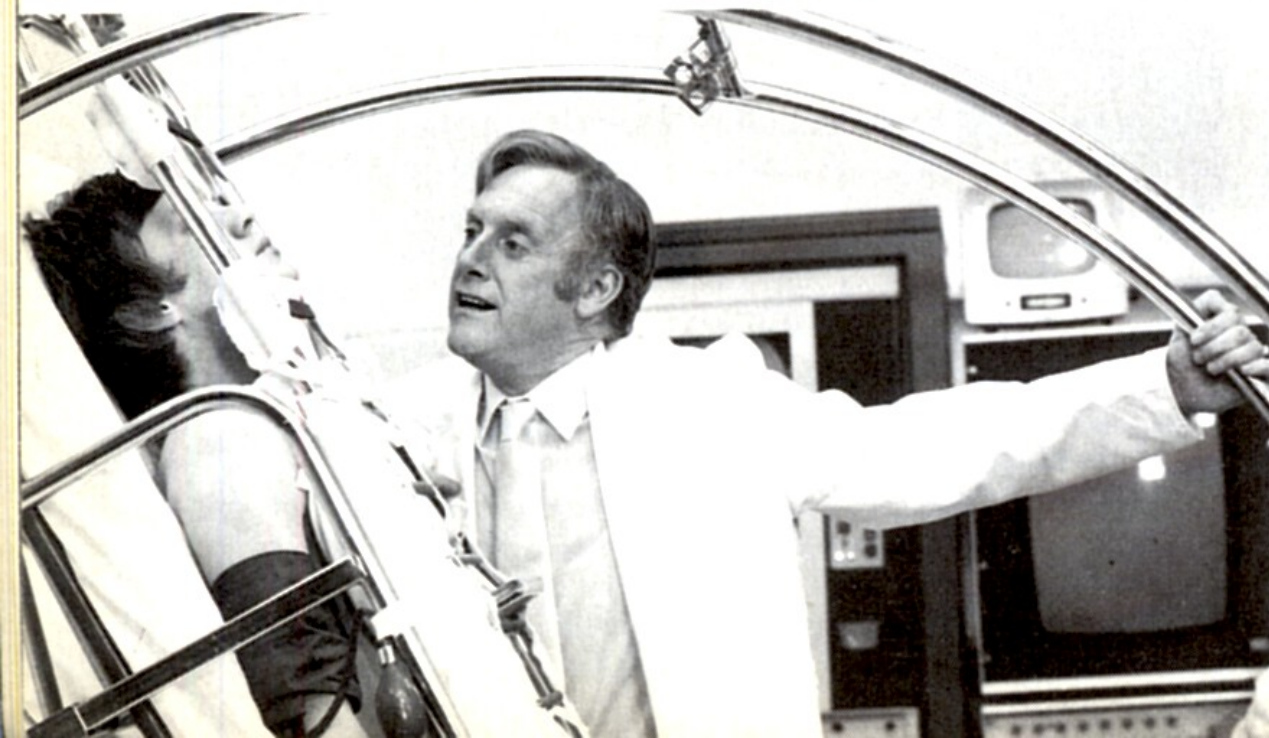
"Other than that I don't know, I think I just love the

work. I never grew up—that's part of my problem, but it's also part of the success because it makes it very spontaneous. We don't want to get into the tricks of the old-aged and just walk through it. We mustn't do that. I'm still learning my craft, and—God almighty—I've got a lot to learn. You learn every time you do a job. I think John Gielgud [*THE ELEPHANT MAN*] would tell you the same thing—and he's 90 and no more a better actor is there on the face of the planet. I'm a great admirer of Johnny Gielgud; he's a wonderful actor. We never stop learning. I think that the day that you do is the day that you hang it up."

Commenting on his limited time on the set, McDowell felt that the smaller roles come with their own set of demands of concentration and technique. "It's kind of fun coming in and doing just one day," he admitted. "Although, I think, it's more difficult, because you don't have the continuity. You have to really concentrate in and snap the character off, pretty much. I also think the smaller roles take a different technique to get them up to speed. You have to be very careful not to over do it and say, 'I've only got a day—let's go over the top!' It's better to be truthful, always be truthful. And, that's what I try to do."

McDowell went on to add that much of his belief in truthful acting came from his initial feature film experience. "Lindsay Anderson [*O LUCKY MAN*, *BRITANNIA HOSPITAL*] was my teacher and my mentor, because he directed my first film [*IF*]. His direction was

McDowell's other early claim to genre fame came as the likable Mick Travis in the subversive *IF...* (1971), a role he reprised in 1973's *O LUCKY MAN* (right, with director Lindsay Anderson), a fanciful modern odyssey which takes a turn into science-fiction (left, with Graham Crowden as the mad Professor Millar).



FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

REVIEW

New martial arts excess upstaged by a little bit of the old ultra-violence.

fairly simplistic: 'Shut your mouth!' To which I would try and say, 'But what about...' And he'd come back with, 'Shut your mouth!' I remember once I thought I'd try something that I felt was very risqué, a little piece of acting. And, he went, 'Cut! What are earth are you doing?' And, I said, 'Well, I'm just ...' And, he said, 'No no, for God's sake just tell the truth.' And, really, it's as simple as that. That is what acting is: just simplifying. I heard one actor—well he wasn't really an actor but he said, 'I can't believe they're paying you all this money for lying.' And I thought, 'That will be a short career.' And it was."

Even though he admits it was not that simple to do at first, he feels that ultimately one has to have confidence in oneself to make it in the business of acting. And after that it is also good to put the whole thing in perspective and take it with a proverbial grain of salt. "Well, of course it's all very well for me to say it. It sounds very smug, you know, sitting here after doing it for 30 odd years. It's not that simple. When you're first starting out, you have stuff like confidence to worry about. How can you be totally confident when you've never actually done it? It's very hard to instill confidence in a young actor. And, believe me 90 percent of it is confidence. That's getting up and doing it.

"If I actually thought about it, but you see, you don't think about it either. You just instinctively do it. And, don't try and analyze the shit out of it because it doesn't bear analysis. There's nothing to it. As Anthony Hopkins [THE LION IN WINTER, SILENCE OF THE LAMBS] use to say, 'Well, it's just acting luv, it's just acting!' And, I totally agree with him."

Subsequently, McDowell was called back to the dojo to continue filming. As he positioned himself onto the seat of the lifting rig, it began to bob up and down, giving the intended impression that he was floating in the air. Smiling a devilish little grin, he slyly joked, "This reminds me a bit of the old days when I use to do magic mushrooms!" The entire crew broke out into uproarious laughter. □

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

First Look Pictures presents a Zeta Entertainment Ltd. Production. Produced by Mark Yellen, Aki Komine. Executive producers, Taka Ichise, Zane W. Levitt. Directed by Tony Randel. Written by Peter Atkins & Tony Randel, based on the novel by Buronson & Tetsuo Hara. Director of photography: Jacques Haitkin. Edited by Sonny Baskin. Music, Christopher L. Stone. Makeup, Sota FX. Screened at AFM 2/1995, rated R.

Kenshiro.....Gary Daniels
Lord Shin.....Costas Mandylor
Ryugen.....Malcolm McDowell

by Jay Stevenson

The feature-length anime FIST OF THE NORTH STAR is one of the blemishes on the otherwise excellent reputation of recent Japanese imports, so it's hard to imagine why anyone thought it should be remade as a live-action English-language film. The weaknesses are of the sort pretty much guaranteed to defeat attempts at translation: the only thing the animated version has going for it is the almost comically excessive cartoon violence, which couldn't possibly survive an R-rating; and the biggest problem, the plot, is the one thing that survives (more or less) intact in the remake.

The whole thing amounts to a showdown between the Kenshiro, the North Star (Daniels), and Lord Shin, the Southern Cross (Mandylor, providing competent but standard villainy). Along the way, Shin harasses Ken's former girl friend (Isako Washio), and his minion wreck havoc on the sub-ROAD WARRIOR wasteland.

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE received a recent, limited re-release. Despite deceptive ads, there was no restored footage, but the film holds up well.



Gary Daniels as Kenshiro, the title character in FIST OF THE NORTH STAR. The live-action remake of the Japanese anime fails to improve on its source.

The trick is how to pad this meager story to feature length, and the filmmakers' answer is to have Ken wander aimlessly through the desert for the first half of the movie, no longer desiring to be the North Star. Before being killed off, McDowell pops up for about two minutes as Ken's father; then his continuing voice-overs pester Ken to take up the good fight. (In one low point, his voice is synched up to the mouth of a foam rubber corpse—in no way resembling McDowell—that pops up as a sort of nightmare vision to the guilt-wracked former Fist.) When the plight of those oppressed by Shin finally forces Ken to accept his destiny, how does he defeat an oppo-

ponent who previously defeated him? Well, he just does, and because it's the final reel and he's the hero, we're supposed to accept it.

Although the stage-bound production results in an unrealistic world that actually looks more stylized than threadbare (thanks to Haitkin's photography), the weak plot is not helped by the overall execution. A demonstration of Ken's North Star technique consists of jabbing his hands just shy of his opponents nose, conjuring up images of The Three Stooges—except that Ken's victims explode!

As if to remind us that McDowell deserves better vehicles for his talent, Kit Parker Films re-released A CLOCKWORK ORANGE in a limited run. Although the ads promised a brand-new print (presumably restoring footage clipped by Kubrick because of an X-rating), the cut was the one that's been shown in periodic revival since the initial release.

Still, the film holds up well. In fact, rather than looking dated, this dark vision of the future now seems far too contemporary, as if taking place in some skewed parallel universe where typewriters and vinyl records still proliferate. Kubrick's black humor seems perhaps more condescending today, but McDowell's subversive performance, slyly engaging our sympathy against all our better judgement, holds the whole saga together. □



MOMMY

Dick Tracy writer Max Allan Collins directs an "old-fashioned" thriller.

By Steven J. Lundin

Muscatine, Iowa, population 23,000, is the last place in the world you'd expect to find *Scream Queen* Brinke Stevens, *Mike Hammer* creator Mickey Spillane, *STAR TREK*'s Majel Barrett, *THE EXORCIST*'s Jason Miller, and *THE BAD SEED*'s Patty McCormack. But Max Allan Collins (*Dick Tracy*) lured this exciting collection of well-known names to his hometown for the filming of his psychological thriller, *MOMMY*.

MOMMY is the story of the relationship between sweet 11-year-old Jessica Ann Sterling (played by sweet 11-year-old local actress Rachel Lemieux) and her overprotective mother. The action starts when school teacher Mrs. Withers (Barrett) refuses to give Jessica Ann the coveted Outstanding Student Award and turns up dead. Lt. March (Miller) smells a psychopath on the loose. His feelings are corroborated as the bodies begin to pile up and the finger of guilt points squarely at Mommy. Mommy's thoughtful younger sister, Beth (Stevens), tries to intercede on her little niece's behalf, but is too late to stop the murder spree. The action comes to a head with a final-reel romp through a local junk yard strewn with more than just old cars. Collins "knows how to splash the blood



Mommy (*THE BAD SEED*'s Patty McCormack) is about to engage Mrs. Withers (*STAR TREK*'s Majel Barrett) in a deadly parent-teacher conference.

around," but *MOMMY* aspires to be far more than a gore fest—a retro noir suspense movie, a la *PSYCHO*. According to Collins, "It's an old-fashioned suspense story and a homage to Patty McCormack's original role in *THE BAD SEED*."

Collins is the famous writer who took over the *Dick Tracy* syndicated comic strip from its creator, Chester Gould, in 1977. He is also the infamous writer who was fired from scripting *DICK TRACY* in 1993. In addition to producing a series of historical novels, for which he won two Shamus awards, Collins is working with Tekno comics on an adaptation of Mickey Spillane's *Mike*

Danger, and has been scripting *Ms. Tree* for DC comics and *Johnny Dynamite* for Dark Horse comics. Today, he's in the movie business.

"*MOMMY*itis" had taken the town by storm. Virtually every storefront bore some sign paying homage to the production; the local greasy spoon was serving "MOMMY Burgers" and most businesses accepted "MOMMY Money," an equivalent of currency used by the cast and crew. The production had made the front page of the paper at least 18 times, and almost everybody in town had been used as an extra. It is by no coincidence that Max Allan Collins and his producers raised

most of the money locally—he's the native success story who never left town! *MOMMY* was as much a part of the local economy as corn and horse-hoey.

Barrett explained what she was doing 2,000 miles away from Los Angeles—on planet Earth instead of the deck of the *Enterprise*: "I had just gotten off a plane and was on my way home when I got a call from my agent," she said. "When he told me Max was involved, I agreed to do a part in the production. I'm going to be in Iowa a total of 24 hours, and I'm working most of it and having a ball. This is just a marvelous production. In all my years of working in Hollywood, it's rare to find such local support or such an interesting and talented collection of stars in such a remote location." Noted Stevens, "In Hollywood, when they want to shoot in a small town, they go to Burbank."

Crouched over a monitor in a hot garage decorated with semi-effective flypaper strips, Collins explained why *MOMMY* was so special that sane people would give up air conditioning and sushi for a month of heat and Mississippi catfish. "We're doing something here that Hollywood is too bone-headed to do," he said. "We're using underused people logically. Take Patty McCormack, she



Left: Jessica Ann (Rachel Lemieux) in the ghostly junk yard. Right: The ghost of murdered Mark Jeffries (Michael Cornelson) visits Jessica Ann in a dream.

hasn't played a psychopath since *THE BAD SEED*, a role she won an Academy Award nomination for! And Brinke Stevens is a terrific actress who's been typecast as a villain. She's a dramatic actress who the Hollywood suits have refused to let out of her vampire cape. So we're casting her as a good girl because we believe in her talents. Majel Barrett's role has nothing to do with the *STAR TREK* universe. She began her career as an actress and we felt that she could play a schoolteacher just as well as she played a nurse or an alien! And Jason Miller makes as good a detective as he does a priest. All these people love the film and are giving us 110%! Hollywood snobbishness and one-upmanship has been left outside the city limits!"

Following in the footsteps of Orson Welles, Collins functioned as *MOMMY*'s writer, producer, director, and resident babysitter (his son is the official fly swatter). Although this represented his first turn calling the shots behind the camera, the role fit him as comfortably as an old Gap t-shirt. Collins' name is as well known in Hollywood circles as it was to the readers of *Dick Tracy*. He has had several movie properties optioned. This year's hit *NYPD BLUE* narrowly beat out his long-running *Ms. Tree* comic book as ABC's violent crime offering for the season. A week earlier he had just returned from Nashville where his screenplay *THE EXPERT*, starring Jeff Speakman, was being shot.

Later, in the makeup room, Stevens arrived in her faux cheerleader outfit to be made into a "good girl," while we continued our conversation with Collins and producer Jim Hoffmann, who volunteered more reasons why this film could never have been made in Hollywood. "Our budget is

\$1.1 million, and we're augmenting the production with donations from the town itself," said Hoffman. "We're getting a new house to use, any location we want, clothes, food, extras; add it up and we're producing a \$3 million picture for a third of the cost. Additionally we're shooting on video and then applying the digital filmlook process in post-production. This makes the video look like it was shot on film! It's the hottest thing these days—John Laroquette uses it on his show. Utilizing this process, we can afford to hire a bigger crew (30 at last count) and better name talent. This is an A movie with a little more than a B budget."

A knock at the trailer signaled the arrival of the woman who inspired Collins to write *MOMMY* in the first place. Patty McCormack stepped out of the heat and into our now cramped interview-makeup room. She didn't look half as scary as she seemed in the dailies. Collins continued, "This script reflects what may be an industry trend away from gore and back to suspenseful storytelling. Hollywood is great on icing but short on cake. What we're offering here is a lateral move back to suspense. I'm making a leap of faith that we can scare the heck out of people with some subtlety." Brinke bent around in her chair: "But Max,

you promised that there'd be some blood!" Collins responded, "Don't worry, honey; not all the kills happen off-camera."

Side by side, McCormack and Stevens could not possibly look less like sisters. But as the two makeup artists slowly brought out McCormack's blond haughtiness and Stevens' brunette sensuality, it became clear that a certain dramatic complement made them work as a pair. To McCormack, *MOMMY* represents a natural cycle in an acting career that began with *The BAD SEED*. "Max told me that my original movie was one of the inspirations for his writing career," said McCormack. "Naturally, it was quite a catalyst for mine, and is the type of role that I haven't had much of a chance to play." Added Stevens, "Everybody loves playing a villain. Evil is present in all of us, and we have the opportunity to get paid to act it out."

Like most individuals who have survived several decades making a living in Hollywood, McCormack has played with everybody from Wes Craven to J.R. (*DALLAS*). She shares the common enthusiasm that *MOMMY* is a special production that is free from the conventions that make Hollywood such an awful/wonderful place. "We're here to make a movie—pure and simple. I'm

playing a part that was written specifically for me...do you know what an honor that is!? And I'm working with wonderful people." She cast a look over at Stevens. "Even if they're not wearing fangs."

MOMMY is slated for release this month at your local video store. Would Collins put himself through six months of nonstop work to make another film? "In a heartbeat, but don't anybody send me any scripts—this is only worth it if you do it for yourself." □

Lt. March (Jason Miller, of *THE EXORCIST*) questions Mrs. Sterling.



THE SECRET



Above: the Selkie (a mythic Celtic being, half-human and half-seal) and her husband fashion a seaborne cradle for their children. Below: generations later, Jamie washes away at sea in the cradle, and then miraculously reappears.



Avoiding the artistic confines of the Hollywood studio system is not easy for independent filmmakers, but John Sayles has managed that feat, delivering a series of successful features that refuse to be pigeonholed. Under the auspices of Roger Corman, Sayles began his career writing scripts like *PIRANHA*, *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS*, and the cult classic werewolf tale *THE HOWLING* (which established prosthetic bladder transformation effects as *de rigeur* for a decade). He then made a name for himself directing such art house films as *RETURN OF THE SECAUCUS SEVEN*, *BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET*, and *MATEWAN*.

Sayles' latest effort, released

earlier this year, is *THE SECRET OF ROAN INISH*, a fable of hope and redemption that takes place after World War II on the sea-ravaged west coast of Ireland. Jeni Courtney plays Fiona Connelly, whose infant brother, Jamie, was swept out to sea in a cradle several years before, and whose mother has recently died. Fiona enters the adult world through an encounter with the Selkies, shape-shifters who can change from seals into people.

The screenplay is based on *The Secret of Ron Mor*, a novella by Rosalie F. Fry. "It's a book that Maggie Renzi, who I live with and who was one of the producers, had read when she was ten years old," explained Sayles. "I kind of liked the combination of fantasy and re-

OF ROAN INISH

HOWLING scripter John Sayles directs a new shape-shifter.

BY

DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Besides giving the film an edge not found in the book, Sayles introduced a new character played by John Lynch. "There is a mention that the little lost boy is one of the 'dark ones,'" said Sayles, "and that in every generation there is a dark one who is good at catching fish and knowing about the sea: the one who continues the blood line of the Selkies, the seals, in the family. I wanted a kind of adult personification of the dark one, so I invented that character and gave him some of the plot. He's kind of the crazy uncle that catches the fish by hand and tells the story of the Selkie woman. It's sort of like the pirate who tells the story to Jim Hawkins in *TREASURE ISLAND*. A kid is on a quest, and some of the quest is knowledge, and some of that knowledge may be a little bit scary. It's a very small book, so I had to flesh it out in terms of dialogue and a little bit of story, but the basic plot is the same."

Because the film is a bleak, truthful vision of life in an isolated fishing village, Sayles eschewed the brightness and light often associated with Irish life in previous films. "I think about *DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE* and those kinds of Disney movies from the '60s and '70s, where there was an attempt to have things be light and bright," said the director. "So if they had made a movie about an Irish fishing village, it would look like a theme park version of an Irish fishing village, not the village itself. You wouldn't have someone

gutting a fish. You might see a fish, but it would be whole. The weight of the work is sort of missing in those movies, and one of the things that Haskell Wexler, the cinematographer, and I talked about was that these were working people who constantly had something in their hands that they were doing. Their world is very beautiful in daytime but not especially well-lit at night. Electric power was a very new thing in that part of the world. So we kept the light a little low-keyed. If there's dirt we showed it rather than glossing it over.

"If you go to those Western islands, they're even bleaker than we showed. Some of them are just rocks in the sea. If you want to grow anything you haul seaweed out there and throw it

on top of the rock, and that's your soil. Just as the grandfather says at the beginning, 'The sea gives and the sea taketh away'—I wanted that feeling that nature had a personality: it could be friendly and nourishing one moment and very dangerous and even lethal in the next moment."

Though the film is a fantasy, while preparing for the production, Sayles decided to aim for a tone in the tradition of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. "Although the protagonist is a child, in this case a ten-year-old, it is not necessarily a children's movie," said Sayles. "I liked those movies when I was a kid, because there was a kid in kind of adult situations holding their own and not because the movie had condescended to make every single thing understandable to me."

Filming the seals presented

Susan Lynch as the sea-going Selkie who marries a human husband.



ality. Unlike a lot of fantasy stories, the day is won not by finding the magic ring or secret passage, but by the kids' making a very adult commitment and then doing a lot of hard work."

The filmmaker feels that, by returning to the tradition of oral history, he can use the elements of fantasy to deliver a message. "In these stories, there is that core of practicality to something that can be very fanciful," he said. "The Selkies are both a Scots and Irish myth that I had heard of before, which the writer of the book tapped into when she was writing her children's story. Almost anywhere that you have seals, you have a myth. The Eskimo and the Inuit Indians have their own, and probably the Hawaiians have their version."

ROAN INISH

REVIEW

So far, this year's best genre film.

THE SECRET OF ROAN INISH

First Look Pictures Release. 1/95, 103 min. Director, John Sayles. Executive producers, John Sloss, Glenn R. Jones & Peter Newman. Director of photography, Haskell Wexler, A.S.C. Editor, John Sayles. Production Designer, Adrian Smith. Costume designer, Consoleta Boyle. Music, Mason Daring. Screenplay by John Sayles based on the novel *Secret of Ron MorSkerry* by Rosalie K. Fry.

Fiona Connelly.....	Jeni Courtney
Tess Connelly.....	Eileen Colgan
Hugh Connelly.....	Mick Lally
Eamon.....	Richard Sheridan
Tadhg.....	John Lynch
Selkie.....	Susan Lynch

by Steve Biodrowski

The real secret of this movie is: Why isn't it ridiculous? Described in plot synopsis, it certainly sounds incredibly silly, yet watching it is not like stepping into a world where reality gives way to the convention of Hollywood fantasy and easy happy endings. It's more like being gradually convinced of the improbable, until the irrefutable intrusion of the impossible seem completely logical and acceptable, not a dramatic contrivance. Perhaps the secret is that the film never breaks with reality. That is, the conventional form would be to establish the mundane and then shatter it with the introduction of the fantasy element; instead, this film bends and stretches our expectations, but never beyond what we're willing to believe.

Partly this is due to a well-structured



Sayles added the character of Tadhg (John Lynch) who tells Fiona (Jeni Courtney) the tale of their ancestor's marriage to a Selkie.

script but also to careful visualization. The harsh beauty of the Irish location (as captured by Wexler's camera) seems capable of hiding something magical, while the threat of rough seas is never far enough away for us to lapse into complacency. This, plus matter-of-fact handling of elements like the transformation, goes a long way toward suspending our disbelief.

The plot revolves around the disappearance of Jenny's younger brother, Jimmy, swept out to sea as a baby.

Jenny is told a series of stories about the sea, which sound to our ears like tall tales. One of these, from a slightly touched cousin, is that her brother isn't missing; he's with "the other side of the family."

Somewhere in the Connelly past, or so the story goes, an ancestor saw a seal—actually a Selkie—shed its skin to reveal a beautiful woman. He took the woman for his wife, but later the pull of the sea was too strong and she returned. Jenny concludes that the Selkies are upset that the Connelly clan has abandoned their island for the mainland, and they've taken Jimmy to lure the family back. We're never shown any such thing, but when little Jimmy shows up five years later, perfectly healthy and zooming about in his boat-like crib, we simply have to accept the only obvious conclusion.

Perhaps we can do this without laughing because the resolution depends not so much on this revelation as on the action Jenny takes: concluding the Selkies want the Connelly's back on the island, she and her cousin sneak away and labor exhaustively to make the island habitable again. Their hard work earns not only the film's happy ending, but our sustained credibility as well. □

In one of the many oral tales visualized throughout the film, local women revive one of the Connelly ancestors after nearly drowning during a storm.



the director with his toughest problems. The animals were not highly trained; consequently, much of the time and energy of the production went into getting the necessary footage. "Getting the animals' behavior in the same frame as the actors," said Sayles, "in the right moment, with the right weather, with the right props and having them seem to have a consciousness, is always going to be the toughest thing whenever you work with animals. If they're highly trained animals, they're doing things to please their trainer or get fed by their trainer, and you have to arrange it so that it seems that they're doing it because they want to do it or because they want to please the actor who is in the scene with them. We were basically working with wild animals that were acclimated to people, but not trained to do that much. They weren't going to jump on top of a beach ball and roll around the floor. They were trained to do one or two things based on their natural behavior, so it was likely that they would do it when we were in front of a camera. When they go in the water, they may not choose to come up for 20 minutes or where we wanted them to come up. We just knew it was going to take a lot of time, and it did."

The seals were filmed in an area with dramatic changes from low to high tide. The filmmakers built an enclosure using a barrier between the land and an outcropping of rocks that would allow the water to come in but prevent the seals from swimming away. Low tide allowed people to walk around and prepare the area for the shoot. High tide allowed four or five hours in a natural shooting area.

The weather was another concern that had to be factored into the schedule. "Knowing that it was going to be real Irish weather, which is kind of changeable, raw, and—even on a bright day—pretty cold when you go in the water, we figured that that is the look of the place," said Sayles. "It is sunny for only a little bit of the story, and we figured it was going to be sunny for a little bit of our shooting. We had two se-

quences, one where she is walking around the island and one where you actually see a flashback of the little boy being swept away in the cradle boat, where we wanted it sunny. We wanted that scene to start sunny and then turn stormy. Luckily, in our second week of shooting, we had five days in a row where it was sunny, so we got all our sunny weather shooting done in those five days. The rest of the time we could live with it being very changeable or rainy or overcast for the rest of the day.”

Since most of the film was shot on the same beach, Sayles had to be concerned with the continuity of the tides, weather, and local wildlife, so every scene was storyboarded with a card made up describing such details as sky conditions and the presence of seagulls or seals.

“All those variables had to be decided and planned for,” said Sayles. “So we would shoot some sequences for two hours in the morning and then the tide would go out too far, so the boat we were shooting from was no longer afloat. We’d have to go shoot something else and come back when the boat would be afloat again and film the rest of the sequence.”

The film’s most dramatic scenes are of the baby being swept out to sea and the youngster’s return four years later. The production avoided any dangers to the child. Sayles explained, “Basically, we only had a real baby in there when it was close enough to the shore; then we had him surrounded by people, and there was no way he could turn over. When we got further out, we ended up building a mock baby, a doll wearing the same clothes, and shot far enough away so you don’t realize that it’s not a real baby. We pieced that together very much like we pieced the seals together. When it was the four-year-old Jamie we had the cradle boat on a tow line underneath the water with divers on either side of him, so even if he was in over his head he was always being flanked by divers only feet away.

“When I wanted Fiona, the little girl, to imagine these stories that she’s being told and provide the pictures for us to illustrate them, I wanted her to be

REALISTIC FANTASY

“I liked the combination of fantasy and reality,” said Sayles. “Unlike a lot of fantasy stories, the day is not won by finding a magic ring, but by doing a lot of hard work.”



Fiona’s grandfather, Hugh (Mick Lally), tells her a series of fanciful tales, which pave the way for introducing fantasy elements into the actual story.

a person who in fact had never seen a movie, never seen a TV show. Her imagination in a way is a very literal imagination. She doesn’t make a cartoon out of this stuff. A woman turns into a seal. Okay, there would be a seal, and it would shed its skin and there would be a woman underneath. Very practically.”

The film used a mechanical approach to the fantasy elements instead of budget-busting morphing effects. “It’s state-of-the-art as far as the transformation is concerned,” said Sayles. “I went with a much more organic and, in some ways, old-fashioned method of doing the Selkie things. We worked with Chris Lyons who runs Alliance Model Effects in Bristol in Great Britain to make our animatronics and our skins, to supervise all the parts that were not going to be played by real seals, and to do our transformation. A lot of what I asked Chris to do was make it as organic as possible—make it as natural and simple as possible, remembering it’s ten year old who has never seen a movie—never mind TERMINATOR 2—is imagining these transforma-

tions.

“What you see of the seals are our lightly trained seals, documentary footage, and then for certain things the animatronics. People either don’t know there were any animatronics in the film or don’t know which shots there were. We couldn’t use real seals in the open sea because they would swim away and we’d lose them. So we used the animatronics to have them come up and down in the water.

“We did the transformation very mechanically. Chris Lyons and his people made a seal skin and found ways to cut it in certain places so that we could pull it over Susan Lynch, who played the Selkie woman in human form. We combined that in dissolves with some shots of the animatronic seals with the cable-driven muscles working under it as it starts to strain as it gets ready to shed its skin. Sometimes we had 15-20 people pulling cables when there was a group of seals.”

Again, Sayles tried to infuse ROAN INISH with the traditions of oral storytelling for the most part lost on media-soaked

modern audiences. “There are four or five oral stories within the movie, and each is treated in a different way,” he said. “Sometimes, you have the voice of the storyteller running through the story; other times that voice disappears and we only have pictures; other times the voice disappears, and we actually have dialogue and a flashback.

“To me that oral storytelling had such a different place in society than media storytelling we have now. I think that one of the main things that oral storytelling had that we lack now was it told you who you were in the world. It was not about somebody else. Very often it was, ‘Oh, these are the people we were descended from; these are the people who lived the way we do.’ And you can learn something from those cautionary tales: if you’re out on the water and you see a certain sky, you get off the water fast, because that’s how your great uncle Amon died in 1644.

“Now we have media storytelling that excites you but doesn’t necessarily connect with you. You can imagine yourself in it, but the minute the thing is over it’s hard to say, ‘Okay, this is something about me.’ In the oral tradition, you are literally being told something by a member of your family, and if it is going to be passed on, you have to pass it on yourself. I don’t think today that we have the equivalent of that in many places in the world.” □

John Sayles directs a new kind of transformation, turning an Irish legend into this year’s best film.





From left to right: director Tod Browning poses on the set of his greatest success, DRACULA, with star Bela Lugosi, stage producer Horace Liveright, and writer Dudley Murphy.

DARK CARNIVAL

The Secret World of Tod Browning

A meditation on the demise of the director of DRACULA and FREAKS.

By David J. Skal
and Elias Savada

It was perhaps fitting that a man who had loved baseball for at least 70 of his 82 years should die in the middle of the World Series, the game tied 1-1 between the Yankees and the Giants. As a long-naturalized Californian, Tod Browning might be expected to favor the Giants. In fact, he preferred Cincinnati, but was never one to let sentiment influence his bets.

In his carefully guarded private life, Browning adored animals and schmaltzy figurines, but when it came to the sphere of public spectacle, his approach was clinical and unsparing. As a director of motion pictures, he had forged a reputation as the "Edgar Allan Poe of the cinema," a Hollywood prince of criminality, darkness, and the grotesque. His foremost concern as a storyteller was the plight of outsiders, at first depicted as garden-variety criminals, but, as his career progressed, in fantastic distortions worthy of Dorian Gray's infamous portrait. The criminal-outsider, played as often as not by the protean silent-film actor Lon Chaney Sr., began to display physical anomalies reflective of disordered inner states: characters in Browning films wouldn't be merely wronged, guilty, or vengeful; they would also be scarred, crippled, or spectacularly mutilated. Eventually, Browning's cast-asides would include real sideshow freaks, who, through accidents of birth, surpassed anything Lon Chaney could accomplish with rubber humps and harnesses—as well as utterly fantastic alien strangers like the predatory Count Dracula. *FREAKS* and *DRACULA* would, in fact, be his two most famous films, fascinating audiences more than six decades after their initial releases as timeless evocations of otherness, alienation, and dread.

Tod Browning had one of Hollywood's most singular careers, with a tremendous shaping influence on two significant American genres: the gangster picture and the horror film—not to mention their stylish

cinematic nuptials in *noir*. His firsthand knowledge of the industry and its personalities, from D. W. Griffith's pioneering Biograph Company to the sophisticated dream factory of Louis B. Mayer's MGM, would have been the material of a terrific Hollywood memoir.

But Tod Browning didn't like to talk—not about his career, at least. Now, lying in his coffin in a Santa Monica funeral home, he was dead of a wasting illness that had, finally, deprived him of any possibility of speech. It was a grimly ironic comment on the life and death of a man who had made his fortune as a silent film director, but who had had considerable difficulties in adapting his talents to the medium of talking pictures. He would become angry, in his final years, whenever a person he had allowed to become intimate would begin to press for details about his life in Hollywood.

There was much to be curious about. Few directors had displayed such a singular preoccupation with the grotesque—his *FREAKS* had been one of the biggest disasters of the early talkie era, repulsing and infuriating audiences and critics with its unprecedented display of real human deformities, and had been banned in some parts of the world for 30 years. There was his legendary collaboration with the equally secretive Chaney, the "Man of a Thousand Faces" who never revealed his own. There was *DRACULA* with Bela Lugosi. And whether his subject was the criminal underworld or the nether realm of the undead, Browning's films are filled with repeated, almost interchangeable themes, characters, and compositions that impress the viewer with the disturbing power of recurrent dreams. As critic Stuart Rosenthal noted in

1975 in the only substantial critical essay ever published on Browning's work, "Although the work of any *auteur* will repeatedly emphasize specific thoughts and ideas, Browning is so aggressive and unrelenting in his pursuit of

certain themes that he appears to be neurotically fixated on them...Browning expresses his obsessive content in a manner that may be properly described as compulsive."

But while Browning reveled in disturbing and provoking the public, he did so from a position of obsessive privacy. Unlike other Hollywood movers and shakers of his generation, he seemed to care nothing for posterity, or even publicity over which he was not completely in control. He never gave a retrospective interview, dying before the advent of film studies as a respected academic discipline.

Even if an army of credentialed film historians had approached him during his lifetime, it is doubtful that Tod Browning would have been willing to talk. He left the world no papers, kept no diaries, affecting an indifference to the film medium that approached outright contempt. "When I quit a thing, I quit," he was said to have told a friend. "I wouldn't walk across the street now to see a movie." Yet one of his favorite pastimes in his final years was watching old movies in the privacy of his home on the new medium of television.

Finally, in October 1962, he was in no position to reminisce about anything, embalmed in a box and awaiting cremation. Boxes and their secrets had figured with a dark prominence throughout his life. His career began, he claimed, with a turn-of-

Excerpted from the book: "DARK CARNIVAL: The Secret World of Tod Browning, Hollywood's Master of the Macabre" by David J. Skal and Elias Savada, by permission of the publisher Anchor/Doubleday.
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the-century carnival scam, where, as the Living Hypnotic Corpse, he had allowed himself to be repeatedly buried alive in a ventilated coffin. Later, in Vaudeville, he became acquainted with all the tricks of magicians' trunks and cabinets, a theme he would resurrect in picture after picture. His most famous film, DRACULA, dealt with a perambulating Transylvanian vampire and his hiding boxes of native soil. From time immemorial, boxes have symbolized secrets, the unconscious, and the occult. And Tod Browning, perhaps more than any Hollywood director, had chosen to repeatedly exploit this symbol, while jealously guarding secrets of his own. His real name, for instance, wasn't Tod, but the professional alias couldn't have been better chosen—in Old English, the name means "fox" or "trickster"; in German, it is the word for death.

Visiting hours were over in the slumber room at the funeral home of Gates, Kingsley & Gates, but one mourner remained, bringing forth a special box of his own. At the dead man's request, the visitor was to be permitted to spend the night and perform a final ritual. The man, as far as anyone could remember, was called Lucky; he knew little about Browning's life in Hollywood, making his acquaintance as a house painter and drinking buddy. The box he brought with him was nothing mysterious or occult; it was a case of Coors beer. Before he died, Browning had asked Lucky to sit up with him and polish off a final batch. In another show of legerdemain, Browning presented himself as a "recovered" alcoholic, who nonetheless consumed, quite openly, prodigious quantities of brew for the rest of his life. It was said, though never really substantiated, that he received a case a month as a perpetual personal gift from Adolph Coors—the result of a favorable comment Browning had once made about the product to Coors himself at a racetrack, unaware of the beer magnate's identity. Drinking, in Tod Browning's life, amounted to more than just a personal weakness; it precipitated two catastrophes that not

OBSESSION WITH OUTSIDERS

“Eventually Browning's cast-asides would include real sideshow freaks, who surpassed anything Lon Chaney could accomplish—as well as the utterly fantastic Count Dracula.”



Browning directs Lon Chaney, Sr. in a scene cut from WEST OF ZANZIBAR. The director later reused the makeup concept for the final image of FREAKS.

only affected his own life but set in motion changes in a career that would have an outside impact on the future of American film.

To Lucky, Tod Browning was a kindly and generous man who displayed no signs of the dark sensibility revealed in his films. He was a garrulous old man who lived on the sun-drenched beach at Malibu, raised dogs and ducks, and loved nothing so much as preparing gourmet meals in his well-equipped kitchen. But to others, he was a classic Hollywood son of a bitch with a morbid streak a mile wide, who used the film medium to indulge his unhealthy obsession with physical disability and human predation. Hollywood veteran Budd Schulberg, author of the caustic classic *What Makes Sammy Run?*, lived near Browning in the Malibu colony in the 1930s, and considered the director an out-and-out sadist. Browning's critical reception was, and is, equally mixed: to some, he was an unassailable *auteur* of cinematic darkness; to others, he was a cynical hack, who mined the same thematic

material over and over, not to any artistic purpose, but simply out of creative laziness. His most controversial film, FREAKS, has been just as often praised as a compassionate masterpiece as it has been damned for its tasteless, exploitative excesses. One veteran executive at MGM, who did not want to be identified, offered the following icy appraisal: "As a director, he was terrible...as a person he was nothing."

Neither statement is true, but establishing the facts of Browning's life and the meaning of his work presents special problems to would-be biographers, film historians, and critics. Andrew Sarris, in 1968, cited Browning as one of several directors who were "subjects for further research," but research materials remained maddeningly elusive, and no biography appeared, even with Browning's elevation to cult-director status with the 1970s revival of FREAKS on the art-house circuit. *Dark Carnival* intends to fill the gap in the understanding of Browning and his career by drawing on dozens of unpublished inter-

views with the director's coworkers and friends, most now deceased, and new revelations from surviving, recently located family members and from previously untapped archives.

A good biographical subject ideally maintains a certain core of impenetrability, and Browning is no exception, but the present book should at least create a more multidimensional portrait of Browning than has ever been attempted. In a town that has traditionally worshiped fame, self-aggrandizement, and the glare of publicity, Browning's reclusive career and its dissolution amounted to one of Hollywood's most mysterious vanishing acts. *Dark Carnival*, the authors hope, will shed some illumination on its methods and machinations.

In October 1962, when Tod Browning died, America was less interested in pondering the metaphors of stage magic than it was in the more tangible escape exploits of myriad tunnelers under the Berlin Wall. The Cold War was growing warm, and in a few short weeks the dark rite of the Cuban Missile Crisis would plunge America into a collective ritual more terrifying than anything Browning had ever depicted in a film. Count Dracula's sarcophagus had long been replaced by the fallout shelter as a cultural locus of dread, and, unlike the vampire, the atom bomb didn't evaporate at dawn. A quaintly morbid trickster forgotten in an impersonal age of mass destruction, Tod Browning vanished from this world with an intimate flourish of macabre celebration. For the dead man and his loyal friend in the Santa Monica slumber room, only one trick remained: making the final case of Coors disappear. □

(David J. Skal is the author of *Hollywood Gothic*, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, and *V is for Vampire*; he was interviewed in *Imagi-Movies 2:2*. Elias Savada is a film historian and director of the Motion Picture Information Service in Bethesda, Maryland; he compiled the recently published *America Film Institute Catalog: Film Beginnings, 1893-1910*.)

DARK CARNIVAL and FATHER OF FRANKENSTEIN

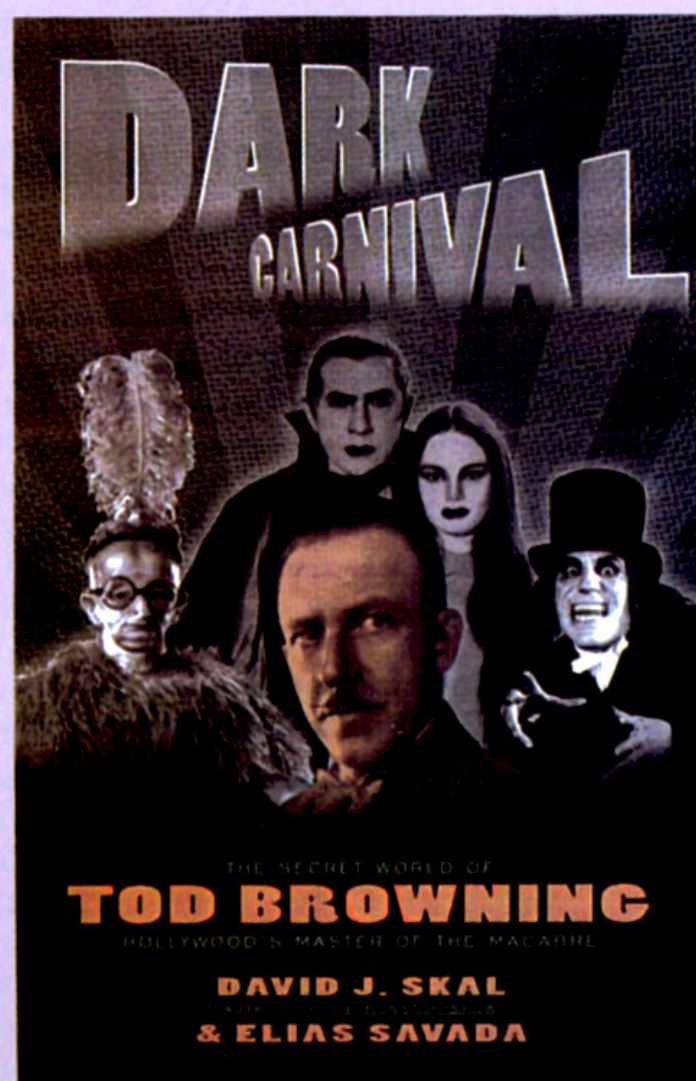
The directors of DRACULA & FRANKENSTEIN appear in two vastly different literary efforts.

By Patricia Moir

Although the name of Tod Browning is hardly a household word these days, devotees of horror cinema are sure to remember him as the director of the classic Bela Lugosi DRACULA, as well as a number of lesser-known cult favorites. His films, particularly the controversial FREAKS, have been the subjects of numerous critical studies and have had a significant influence on the works of later directors. But even die-hard fans would be hard-pressed to recall the details of Browning's life and career. *Dark Carnival* is an earnest attempt to shed some light on the character of the man whose works have been described both as evidence of cinematic genius and as examples of "loathsome, obscene, grotesque and bizarre" depravity.

It's not an easy task. Few of Browning's friends and associates are still living; records of his life, particularly his formative years, are sketchy and often contradictory. Skal and Savada have done a remarkable job of constructing a chronology out of public records, studio memos, and anecdotes, outlining Browning's rise from circus and vaudeville performer to favored Hollywood director, and his subsequent fall from grace following the release of FREAKS in 1932. Along the way, they include the kind of details that will delight fans and collectors of movie trivia: How many readers know, for example, that it was Browning's interest in dance marathons that eventually led to the filming of Sydney Pollack's THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY? Or that William Faulkner wrote the original dialogue for THE DEVIL DOLL? And who can fail to be fascinated by the account of the female circus freak who "went Hollywood" and insisted on having her beard dyed and waved for her role in Browning's film? Yet, despite this wealth of factual information, the director himself remains an elusive figure.

The authors clearly demonstrate that



A new biography attempts to shed light on the elusive early horror film director Tod Browning.

Browning's own version of his personal history was mostly fictionalized. Unfortunately, debunking the myths proves much easier than establishing the truth. The shadowy image of Browning which lurks between the lines is frustratingly incomplete, and what can be accepted with reasonable certainty is unflattering, to say the least. Colleagues and acquaintances repeatedly describe him as "sadistic," and he appears to have been a life-long alcoholic, womanizer, and insufferable egotist. Skal and Savada try their best to provide an evenly-balanced view of their subject's character, speculating on the psychological motivations suggested by the thematic "evidence" of Browning's films, but there is simply not enough solid biographical information to establish credible connections in this fash-

ion. Reaching for Freudian interpretations, they frequently overextend themselves; it is hard to take seriously, for instance, the assertion that Browning's artistic fascination with physical deformity is the result of a castration complex arising from the early loss of his teeth.

Amateur psychoanalysis aside, *Dark Carnival* provides a richly detailed portrait of the world which Browning inhabited, and of the birth and Golden Age of the American film industry. Browning's career in show business began with circus sideshows and carried him into the heart of the great Hollywood myth. He met and collaborated with the likes of Griffith, Thalberg, Mayer, and a host of legendary actors, and it is within this cinematic sub-culture, the sheer spectacle of Hollywood itself, that we find perhaps the most telling clues to Browning's identity. Fascinated all his life by showmanship and illusion, he was perfectly, tragically adapted to life in the hungry public eye. Browning created for himself a persona as *auteur* and playboy and then became what the legend demanded. He was both a consummate actor and an enthusiastic consumer of the entertainment culture which he helped to create; like so many other Hollywood luminaries, he seems to have fallen victim to the ever-increasing need for readily-available stimulation and sensational experience. His excesses suggest a parallel with the life of another controversial icon whose identity will forever be eclipsed by that of his times: Andy Warhol.

Dark Carnival is as accurate and thorough a record of Browning's life as we are ever likely to see, and it provides an invaluable source of information in the form of an exhaustive filmography, as well as plot synopses and a review of important criticism. But it is also, ultimately, an indictment of the movie industry and its glorification and subsequent exploitation and abandonment of its most talented artists. As such, it should be taken seriously not only by stu-

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REAL VS REEL TERROR

It's an old debate, but what do the films themselves have to say?

Does art imitate life, or does life imitate art? Or is it futile to attempt to separate the two?

In our age of instantaneous, mass-media communications, the nature of reality, once the exclusive and esoteric concern of philosophers and theologians, has become a matter of public debate. In our daily lives, we accept as "fact" the portrayal of events and experiences in a highly abbreviated and symbolic form via the electronic media. The ways in

which we receive, perceive, and process information are constantly changing with the introduction of new modes of communication; and the skills and strategies which we develop in response to the media affect, in turn, the ways in which we construct meanings out of our actual life experiences. The inventions of the printing press, motion pictures, television, and videotape, and the introduction of new forms of narrative—cinema jump-cuts, for instance, or

rock videos—have had incalculable effects upon both what we see and how we see it.

I say "incalculable" because, despite a great deal of speculation, no one is quite sure just how or to what extent the media have affected our perceptions of reality. We can be pretty sure that something is going on—we know, for example, that a child who has grown up watching television is able to view rapidly edited commercials and comprehend their messages, while his grandfather will probably not even see many of their split-second images. But no one has yet devised a satisfactory way of identifying and studying the processes involved; and, since these processes are mostly unconscious, we are not able to describe them in any but the vaguest terms.

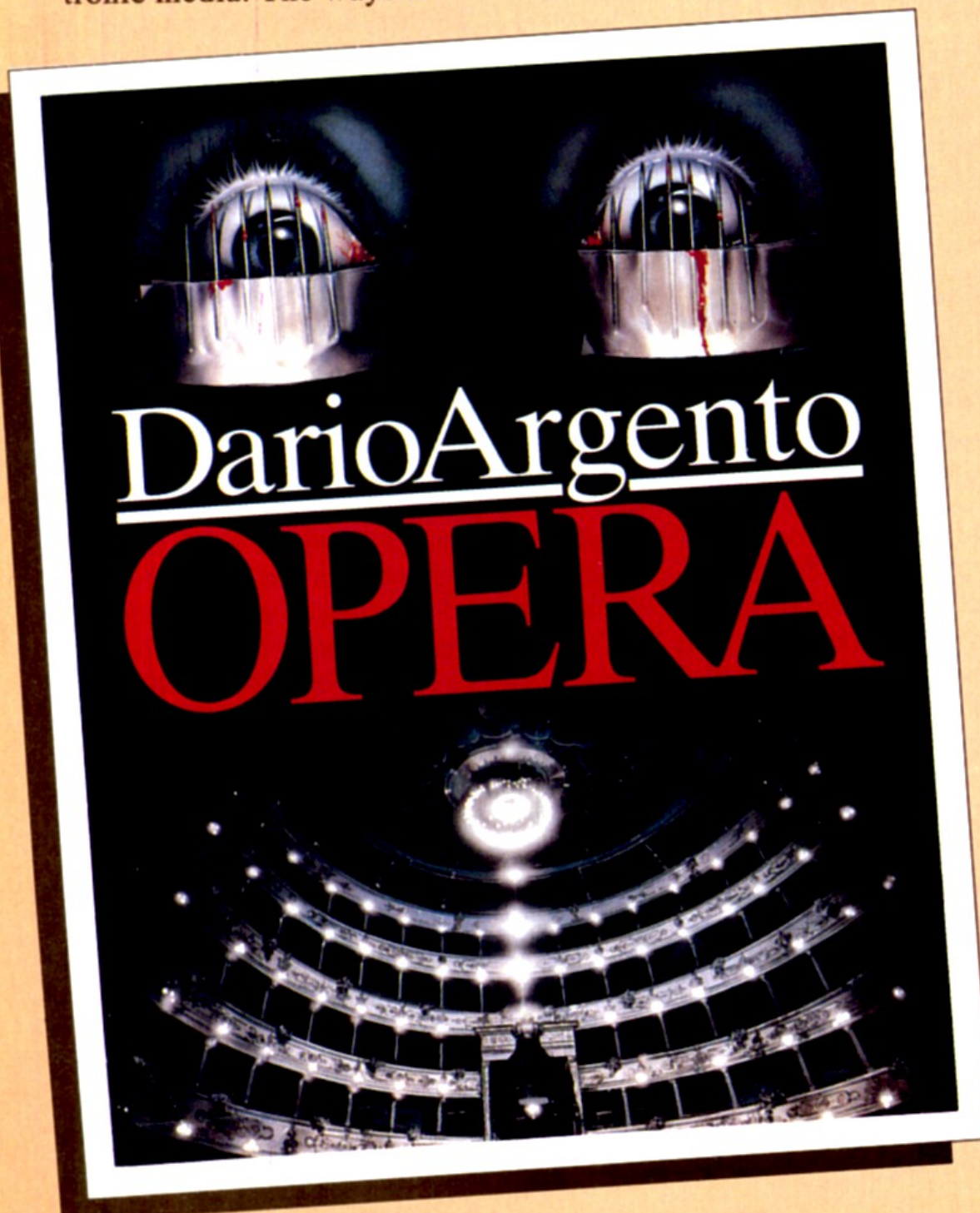
Uncertainty has bred discomfort. Fears of subliminal manipulation, of the subtle altering of values and attitudes, of a decrease in attention span or the capacity to criticize, of a blurring between the "real" and "unreal" world—all accompany our enthusiastic plunge into the information age. Not surprisingly, the genres most often singled out as the objects of these concerns are those which present the most overt challenges to social norms: pornography, violent action-adventure, and, of course, horror. The result has been a fascinating and often ir-

rational dialogue between media critics on one hand and media artists, producers, and satisfied consumers on the other.

Critics generally operate on the assumption that the media can and do influence values, moral judgments, and behaviors. Despite the unshakable conviction which drives the likes of Bob Dole, the PMRC, and any number of movie classification boards, there is no statistically significant proof that horror movies and related genres have any lasting negative effects on behavior. Studies suggest that there may be some correlation between exposure to media violence and short-term aggressive behavior, but the levels of aggression observed fall far short of those claimed by most critics, and the nature of any causal relationship has yet to be established.

So how do we explain those well-publicized murderers who claim to have been inspired by the messages in rock music, films, and TV shows? The question here is not whether the media influence the direction or form of real-life violence, but whether they cause violent impulses in the first place. Certain people, it seems, are negatively affected by violent and intense images. After the release of *THE EXORCIST*, psychiatrists coined the term "cinema neurosis" to describe the fear and symptoms of demonic possession which afflicted some individuals who attended the film; case histories showed that susceptibility to this disorder was linked to pre-existing neurotic disorders. Several American hospitals have banned MTV in

After *TENEBRAE* (which has some interesting thematic parallels with *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS*—i.e., a book that infects readers with its author's madness), director Dario Argento further explored the dynamic between horror in life and in art with the ambitious *OPERA* (left).





The most apocalyptic filmic vision of the relationship between art and life is *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS* (left), wherein Sam Neill's John Trent learns that reading Sutter Cane novels can alter reality. More commonly, the effect of books is limited to casting spells or revealing dangerous knowledge, as with H.P. Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*, seen above in the film of the same name.

psychiatric wards because its emotionally intense and often violent imagery was observed to agitate people who already had psychological problems, but that's no reason to condemn music videos; a number of studies have shown the most frequent viewers of MTV to be among the most academically accomplished and socially well-adjusted. Murderers may have found some kind of inspiration in the sheer inventiveness of horror movie violence. But, to quote Stephen King's *Danse Macabre*, had they not seen the movies, "stupidity and lack of imagination might well have reduced them to murdering...in some more mundane way."

Obviously, I am not doing justice here to the arguments of either critics or defenders of the horror genre. What I wish to point out is simply that there is no real proof that art can cause corresponding phenomena in reality, although there may well be a more complex and presently undefined relationship between the horrors in art and in life. And as long as we are uncertain about the nature of that relationship, we will continue to fear its effects.

Fear, of course, is the essence of horror. Horror films exploit our existing fears, allowing us to experience infinite variations on the themes of suffering and death. Each new object of our popular fears—modern medical technology, nuclear war, serial killers—quickly becomes the subject of a new subgenre. Naturally (and ironical-

ly), our fear of the media has become a media subject, and our fear of media horrors has become a subject of horror films.

In the movies, as in life, the response to the issue of art's powers of influence is speculative and ambivalent. Sometimes it is clearly defensive: Stephen King's *Misery*, for example, suggests that the artist and the works he creates may be no more than convenient focal points for the obsessions of already unbalanced minds. Art brings texture to what might otherwise be mundane delusions, but no one can blame the author if a dangerous psychotic chooses to identify with his creation. King is certainly aware that artists are frequently blamed for the unforeseeable consequences of their creative acts, even when they are the result of massive misinterpretations. So rapid is the public response to the unsettling suggestion of immoral artistic influence that judgments are often formed even before a relationship has been established. Take the Charles Manson murders as a case in point. The Beatles were made suspect and forced to explain and defend the song "Helter Skelter" when Manson imposed his own delusional meanings on its text. And although the murder of actress Sharon Tate was a random act, the public was quick to find a connection with her husband Roman Polanski's fame as a director of horror

films, particularly *ROSEMARY'S BABY*. Actors also become the victims of misinterpretation, and numerous films have portrayed media personalities as sympathetic and blameless characters who are stalked by disturbed individuals: in Wes Craven's *NEW NIGHTMARE*, Heather Langenkamp is harassed by an anonymous caller (appropriately, the fictional events were based on the actress's real-life experiences); Clint Eastwood is seduced and finally threatened by an obsessive fan in *PLAY MISTY FOR ME*. In these films, as in *MISERY*, we applaud the artist's triumphant meting out of justice where it is due.

However, not all horror movies speak in their own defense. Dario Argento's *TENEBRAE* suggests that both art and artist are directly responsible for acts of real-life violence. Argento's cleverly constructed plot initially creates sympathy for its protagonist, a mystery novel writer whose works have driven a morally outraged and deranged critic to commit a series of brutal murders. Our expectations are shaken when we discover that there are actually two murderers: the critic and the author himself. Not only has the artist been revealed to be a monster; the critic's moral judgments have turned out to be pretty accurate, after all. In the film's final, powerful shot, the author's lover, driven half-mad herself by

these revelations, screams hysterically over and over again; after the image fades, we still hear her over the closing credits. The horror is thus extended beyond the film's internal reality into the reality of the viewer, who is then left to sort out the implications of the film's message for himself. Has watching a film like *TENEBRAE* affected the viewer's outlook in any way? Can the stylish brutality of an Argento movie influence an individual's values, attitudes, or actions? Is Argento hinting that art reveals the true character of the artist, and, if so, what does *TENEBRAE* say about him?

Argento's *OPERA* is even more ambitious. As in *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, a young soprano takes over the lead role in a new production after the diva falls ill, and is subsequently held captive by a madman who conceals his identity. Unlike the Phantom, however, he is not interested in teaching her to sing. Instead, he tutors her in sadism and voyeurism by forcing her to watch him as he commits a series of brutal murders. Argento plays with the concepts of actor and audience, placing his major characters in first one role and then the other as the story progresses. Who is responsible—the director who stages his opera like a horror movie, or the viewers who demand that their taste for human suffering be satisfied through expression in art? Are artist and audience collaborators in creation? In what way is the manipulation of

BY
PATRICIA MOIR

REEL TERROR REVIEW

Reality swallowed into the mouth of madness.

IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS

A New Line Cinema release. 1/15, 94 min. In Dolby and color. Director, John Carpenter. Producer, Sandy King. Camera (Deluxe color; Panavision widescreen) Gary B. Kibbe. Editor, Edward Warschilka. Production designer, Jeff Steven Ginn. Art director, Peter Grundy. Visual effects supervisor, Bruce Nicholson. Special makeup effects, Robert Kurtzman, Gregory Nicotero & Howard Berger. Costumes, Robert Bush & Robin Michel Bush. Music, Carpenter & Jim Lang. Sound, Owen Langevin. Screenplay by Michael De Luca.

John Trent.....Sam Neill
Linda Styles.....Julie Carmen
Jackson Harglow.....Charlton Heston
Sutter Cane.....Jurgen Prochnow

by Patricia Moir

For years now, I've been John Carpenter's biggest ex-fan. Back in 1978, he scared me half to death with HALLOWEEN, and ever since, I've watched dutifully as the effectiveness of each subsequent film has decreased in inverse proportion to its budget. So it is all the more remarkable that, in spite of my low expectations, I found IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS to be the most delightfully terrifying film from any director in recent years. Carpenter's talent for agonizing suspense is once again in evidence, realizing the full potential of Michael De Luca's well-crafted script with excellent dramatic timing and a judicious use of first-rate visual fx.

The story follows insurance investigator Trent (Neill) into an alternate dimension when he is hired by publisher Jackson Harglow (Charlton Heston) to locate horror novelist Cane (Prochnow) and his latest, unpublished manuscript, Trent looks for leads in the author's previous best-sellers, which have a reputation for provoking violent and paranoid responses in readers. Following clues which he reconstructs from the book jackets, Trent sets out with Cane's editor (Julie Carmen) to find the mysterious New Hampshire town of Hobb's End.

What follows is a harrowing road trip into a nightmarish landscape where time and space are as alien and improbable as Cane's fictional horrors. Reality transforms with dream-like logic as the pair find themselves surrounded by the creatures of Cane's imagination, in a mythical village "once the home of an evil older than mankind and



An inhabitant of Hobb's End seems to have stepped out of a Sutter Cane horror novel. Is Cane merely describing events or actually creating them?

wider than the known universe." Is Trent insane, a victim of Cane's visionary novels? Or has Cane really opened the door to malevolent beings from another dimension?

Followers of H. P. Lovecraft will recognize the film's many references to his Cthulhu mythos: Cane is a misguided seeker of forbidden knowledge in the tradition of Erich Zann, and Hobb's End is one of those peculiar points at which human and alien dimensions overlap, the "mouth of madness" from which there is no escape. Carpenter avoids the error which has plagued so many efforts to bring Lovecraftian stories to film, limiting his use of special effects to offer maddeningly incomplete glimpses of horror which defies description. Like Lovecraft, he allows his audience to imagine terrors which, if graphically portrayed, would have been anticlimactic.

Carpenter's strong cast delivers some memorable performances. Prochnow positively shines as the ecstatic prophet of the Old Ones' second coming, and Carmen is deli-

ciously creepy as his unwilling handmaiden. Heston is perfect in the role of Cane's dynamic but uncomprehending publisher, and David Warner adds a touch of class in his all-too-brief appearance as Trent's psychiatrist confidant. Unfortunately, Neill seems a bit out of his depth in Carpenter's dark fantasy world. The script calls for Trent to display a wide range of emotions and reactions, from tough cynicism to terror, skepticism to hysterical madness. The miscast Neill succeeds mainly in looking startled and confused.

But no matter—this movie is relentless, jolting the audience from one disorienting scene to the next, and making such critical reflections pretty much impossible until after the closing credits. Carpenter proves that he can still take his audiences well beyond the usual limits of suspense; I left the theatre with my nerves shattered and my good opinion of his talents fully restored. IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS is as scary and stylish a film as any horror fan could desire. □

reality akin to art? Lofty questions, indeed, and Argento carefully avoids any pat answers. Without absolving his murderer, he still hints that there can be no innocent parties, regardless of their actions or intentions.

These and other films are concerned primarily with art's ability—or inability—to drive real human beings to commit criminal acts of violence, and they portray more or less plausible events which can be rationally explained. But the majority of horror movies are not about natural events, and our fear of some potentially dangerous link between art and the supernatural has provoked responses both to and from the horror genre. Numerous special interest groups (usually of a religious nature) claim that horror movies (and related art forms with supernatural themes—heavy metal music, for instance, or fantasy films and role-playing games) are capable of creating and/or invoking actual supernatural forces. Like the Ouija board in THE EXORCIST, which provides demonic forces with an entrance into Regan's mind and body, fantastic art is seen as a perilous medium by which supernatural and usually malevolent forces can communicate with, influence, and attack the unwary.

Horror movies, in turn, reflect this fear, taking as their subject the evils, Satanic or otherwise, which are supposed to be literally "contained" in music, literature, and films. Both BLACK ROSES and THE GATE deal with the popular belief that rock lyrics contain supernatural messages which can influence or endanger the listener. The former is a truly abysmal film, notable only for its thematic aspirations, but THE GATE is an entertaining and unpretentious movie about a couple of young adolescents who make the mistake of following a ritual prescribed in the works of a mysterious rock group, and must then find the correct magical formula to reimprison the supernatural creatures they have released. This idea of art as a

means of communicating forbidden knowledge recurs frequently, and Lovecraft's *Necronomicon* and various other fictional grimoires figure prominently in many films, notably *THE EVIL DEAD* and its sequels. Typically, some unsuspecting fool meddles in matters he doesn't understand, and the plot then details his subsequent attempts to escape or reverse the consequences of his act. Most often the protagonists commit their fatal errors out of ignorant curiosity or in the mistaken belief that what they read is merely fiction; occasionally, like the sorcerer's apprentice, they act in the mistaken belief that they will achieve worldly benefits for themselves. In either case, the moral is quite clear: some things are best left undisturbed, and we must take care to resist the temptations of knowledge and power. (This same message is central to the religious beliefs of the very groups who are most opposed to horror movies. Ironically, those who condemn the genre seem oblivious to the moral similarities in their own philosophies.)

One curious variation on this well-worn and predictable plot is *SLEEPWALK*, a subtle but effective horror-fantasy with a more optimistic message. In it, a young woman is hired to translate a series of ancient Chinese scrolls; as her work progresses, events in her life begin to reflect passages in the manuscript. It is unclear whether this apparently supernatural connection is real or imaginary, but either way, the contents of the scrolls transform the translator's view of the world, and hence her unique subjective reality. Knowledge and insight may be strange and frightening, but, as portrayed here, they are certainly not evil.

Of all the cinematic responses to media anxiety, the most contemporary are those which suggest that reality itself is merely a construct, called into being through our individual and collective visions and our perpetual reordering of experience into meaningful patterns. The 20th-century revolution in communications media has made us aware as never before of the world's diverse and often

“Those who delve into the “dark half,” the artists who invoke the unconscious in works of horror, run the greatest risk of creating a reality-altering imbalance.”



In *THE DARK HALF*, Stephen King explores the duality of human reality and suggests an artist's work can upset the balance in favor of the “dark half.”

contradictory moralities, systems of knowledge, and world views, and left us reeling with the shock of shattered cultural assumptions. If reality is only relative, what is unreal? Where do we now draw the line?

Horror movies answer these questions with a number of worst-case scenarios. *WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE* offers a vision of reality in which lives are scripted and scripts come to life. The distinction between “real” and “unreal” becomes irrelevant, and we are left only with subjective experience. Ultimately, it doesn't really matter whether Freddy Krueger has been dreamed to life through art or has gained power through our recognition of his independent existence. It is only by accepting an active role in the shaping of her own reality that Heather can reclaim her life, and that of her son, from the power of Freddy's archetypal influence. The battle between Freddy and Heather is an apt metaphor for humankind's 20th-century struggle to become both rational and spiritually conscious.

Stephen King's *THE DARK HALF* also explores the duality of human reality. As in *NEW NIGHTMARE*, the conflict

arises from the opposition of the two extremes of human nature: the rational, creative, and controlled vs. the intuitive, destructive, and unrestrained. Although our collective reality is modeled after the former—there are, after all, obvious advantages in having an orderly society—we must be careful not to dismiss the products of the “dark half” as mere fantasies. Both extremes are equally “real,” equally essential, and what we think of as the immutable reality of the world is really the reflection of one extreme's dominance. Change that balance, and you create a new self, a new world, a new “reality.” It follows that those who delve deepest into the “dark half” of the human psyche—the artists who deliberately invoke the powerful motivations and feelings of the unconscious in works of fantasy and horror—run the greatest risk of creating a reality-altering imbalance. King speaks only of the perils of being a creator, but we might extend his thematic argument to include the minds and souls of the reader/viewer as well. Like Wes Craven, he suggests that we have the ability to choose our reality and control our own destinies—if we

are able to recognize and accept that responsibility.

Perhaps the most apocalyptic view of art and reality to date is John Carpenter's *IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS*. Once again, it is not ultimately important whether the “madness” is a phenomenon created or merely described by the visionary artist. It is the power with which that vision is communicated which determines its effects on reality. The mass media can make an idea—any idea—not only accessible, but virtually inescapable. Communicate that idea perfectly, and the “real” becomes indistinguishable from the invented.

The concept is uncomfortably plausible. After all, there have been countless films made about the phenomenon of demonic possession, but only *THE EXORCIST* seems to have been convincing enough to affect the realities of any significant number of viewers. Those viewers were, as pointed out earlier, predisposed to accept events in the film as fact. But what if there were an even more convincing portrayal of demonic possession—would more people be affected?

Although I'm a staunch defender of the fantastic in the arts—I believe that what we commonly refer to as “reality” would be the poorer without it—I have to admit to my own fears. As a fan and a literary critic, I consume vast quantities of imaginary gore, madness, and pain in print and on film every year. Usually, I'm somewhat detached about it all. But every once in a while, an artist—Dennis Etchison, Bret Easton Ellis—gets behind my eyes and inside my mind, and for a moment I find myself looking out at someone else's world, and I understand what it would be like to be imprisoned within their point of view. The feeling never lasts long, but it leaves me shaken, and just a bit more appreciative of the fragility of the reality that I take for granted.

Does art affect reality? Well, if it doesn't, there's nothing to worry about. But if it does, I hope that artists in all media continue to speculate on the nature and extent of the relationship. Otherwise, we may never know what hit us. □

THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

A fond reminiscence of a classic movie monster.

BY DIANA J. ZEMNICK



The year was 1954, when Rock 'n' Roll was sweeping the nation. Bobby sox, saddle shoes and soda fountains were bursting with adolescence and the baby boomer generation was emerging in their youthful innocence. The post war's lingering somberness sparked the movie industry's creation of Sci-Fi-Horror films sensationalizing multifarious monsters—with gross mutations, oversized insects, and humans physically altered by strange mists and alien invaders—all fully illuminating the traumas of the time and mirroring both the cold war and the fears of the atomic bomb.

Succumbing to the fascination of this upsurge in horror and sci-fi flicks became a popular pastime, one which I thoroughly enjoyed. When the weekend came, my

thoughts turned to the neighborhood theatre, where I continually trotted off, to be scared yet another time. I would sneak up to the balcony where it was quiet, away from my screaming counterparts, so I could enjoy the movie undisturbed, except by the terror on the screen.

Somehow, you never forget that first scary movie. As an impressionable eight-year-old, I took my "maiden voyage" into the world of movie monsters with *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, during the 1954 premiere at the glitzy Paramount theatre in downtown Brooklyn, New York. This film created a lasting impact, one of awe, love, devotion, compassion, and fright, that has spanned over 40 years. On opening Saturday, my Grandfather accompanied my cousin and me to the "grandiose" Paramount, and my butterflies of anticipation and excitement changed quickly to silent fear as I approached the enormous cardboard display of the Creature adjacent

Left: Polly Burson and Ricou Browning took over for Adams and Chapman in the underwater scenes. Below: Browning and director Jack Arnold.



to the box office, along with overwhelming photos adorning the theatre marquee. Everything stood infinitely larger in the mind of an eight-year-old, and I was transfixed. Weak-kneed, I entered the theatre, took my seat, and gingerly awaited the Creature's on-screen debut. The three-minute "evolutionary" introduction seemed to go on forever, but I became distracted by the webbed footprints embedded in the sand at the water's edge, signaling the horror of what was yet to come. When you're young, minutes seem like hours waiting for something to happen. Years later, I understood that the director's job was to reel you in by revealing only bits of the creature at a time, before allowing him to explode fully on the screen.

When the horror was finally unveiled, I trembled at the uncanny appearance of this monstrous form reaching out from the big screen—half-man, half-beast, more frightening than anything else I had ever seen! This awesome childhood experience was enhanced by 3-D, which Universal (along with other studios) used as a ploy in the early '50s to lure audiences away from TV. The method utilized in the *CREATURE* flick was the anaglyph color process, wherein separate red and green images merge into a single 3-D image when viewed through green and red glasses.

Soon, I realized I could play it safe by pulling on and off the glasses that brought the creature out of the screen and into the audience; I even tried wearing them somewhere in-between—close enough to enjoy the movie but far enough away so as not to be terrified.

When it was finally over, and the theatre lights came back on, I realized I must have been crouched low in my seat all that time. Feeling a little silly and a lot scared, I wanted desperately to stay and catch a glimpse





CREATURE COMFORT

JULIE ADAMS

The Beauty recalls the Beast.

By Diana J. Zemnick

Julie Adams, the exquisite, dark-haired lovely in **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, began her movie career under her real name, Betty May Adams. In **BRIGHT VICTORY** and **HOLLYWOOD STORY** (both 1951), she was billed as Julie Adams. Countless films followed, including **SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE** (1957), **TICKLE ME** (1965), **GOODBYE FRANKLIN HIGH** (1978), **BLACK ROSES** (1985), and **BACKTRACK** (1992).

Recently recalling the **CREATURE** film, she remarked, "You never know what picture is going to hit people and stay with them. This picture has really made a great impression and become the favorite of many people. I did a play in Denver a couple of years ago, **DRIVING MISS DAISY**, and they were having a film festival. Since I was in town, they decided to run **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**. I went down, put on the 3-D glasses, and thoroughly enjoyed the film. It brought back many fond memories. One day, I met up with a couple of young special effects artists that were responsible for the creation of the head of the Creature for Planet Hollywood in New York, and they revealed how impressed they were by what they did in **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**. Of course, they are now masters of all the other things they can do, but said that this basically was so simple and yet enormously effective! Today, it's zillions of dollars and tremendously complicated, and very often it does-

Julie Adams recoils from the clutches of the Creature (played by Ben Chapman above water).

of the creature once more. On the train ride home my cousin and I went on and on about the amazing film, and I couldn't help feeling somehow special for having been lucky enough to be there for the premiere of the greatest film I had ever seen!

In retrospect, **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** is an extraordinary odyssey into the unknown world. It's a film that relies on old world craftsmanship, rather than blood and gore. Its classic charm is clear, innocent, and unencumbered. Of course, its main ploy is to frighten, and frighten it does, through such artful techniques as the black-and-white photography that establish the ominous mood of this imaginative story. The early exposure of the reptilian creature reaching up onto the bog-like bank effectively foreshadows the events to come. The 79-minute running time captures the sense of possibilities about the creature, from the magical to the frightening.

Produced by William Alland and directed by Jack Arnold, with a screenplay by Harry Essex and Arthur Ross from a story by Maurice Zimm, **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** featured a showy display of top-notch underwater sequences, due to the



Left to right: Richard Carlson, Adams, Richard Denning, and Whit Bissell examine the petrified hand that leads to their discovering the Creature.

n't have nearly the impact that [our] picture had.

"An actor friend of mine, who is very sophisticated about movie-making, recently said to me, 'I didn't know you could swim that well!' I told him, 'That wasn't me doing the underwater swimming.' He couldn't believe it, so if he as an actor in the business bought the reality of it totally, then there you are. Today, I'd guess you'd go on six locations, while our little jungle was on the back lot of Universal, and Silver Springs, Florida was the only other locale for the underwater settings. It's amazing, with all the technology today, that so many pictures come and go that don't touch people."

What was her fondest memory? "The group of people, the ensemble, was truly wonderful," she replied. "The camaraderie the whole atmosphere of the picture, was extremely buoyant. Everyone seemed to have a good time. Richard Carlson and Denning were fabulous

to work with. Both Ricou and Ben [Chapman] were great guys. I was able to get to know Ricou Browning before we started shooting, when they were remaking the monster suit, and we were closed down for a time. I learned how to use the aqualung with the underwater cameraman and with Ricou, and we all had a wonderful time together. Ricou had a great artistry in his swimming; he expressed so much in those underwater sequences. Back at the Universal lot we would watch the dailies of what Ricou and [stunt double] Polly Burson did that day at Silver Springs. They were truly amazing in that they dived from the surface down to 50 feet. The scene in which he takes me under, Polly takes over—it's really too far to go back up for air; the [scene stops in the edited] picture, but for us it continued, so we were able to view the two of them swim over to the hoses hidden behind the log to retrieve air, there at 50 feet. They were just astonish-



Posed publicity shots such as this emphasized the Creature's interest in Adams, seen here in her custom-made suit.

ingly able in the water!"

Of director Jack Arnold, Adams said, "He had a wonderful, easy manner about him. I enjoyed working with Jack very much, and because of his great ease, no one ever got tense. When you're working on a film of that sort, you always start to giggle at times"—she giggles jovially—"especially while working with all those rubber faces and elements that create the illusion. We really had fun making the picture, and not all films are that way."

Cold weather can become a real hindrance when filming segments in the water. Adams recalls a particular time while shooting a scene in the simulated underground dwelling of the Creature: "We were coming up through the grotto, Ben Chapman and I, and they had forgotten to heat the tank on the sound stage that day. Being November, the water was freezing cold, and by the time we would go to our respective dressing rooms and warm up, it would be time to come out again. They'd pour water all over us, and we would then continue the scene."

Then I remarked that the shorts she donned in the picture were pretty short for that era. "That's right: for the time, it was fairly racy," she replied.

"Oh, one other thing: I never had a custom-made bathing suit before, but the one I wore in the CREATURE film was indeed just that, a custom-made suit, created right there at wardrobe. It was not bought; it was made!"

When I expressed interest in her reaction to being interviewed 40 years later about CREATURE, she laughed. "I have become accustomed to the interest and love for this picture. It's odd, because it's a part of one's life, even though it was long ago; it's very nice to have been part of something that has given so many people enjoyment. Surprisingly, it just all came together and worked. Movies are wonderful, because when they work they just go right to people's sensibilities and stay there. The after-effect this film has generated is engaging, because everyone who ever talks about it, or who comes up, it's always 'Oh, wow—that movie!' In entertainment, that's what we do: we entertain, and we hope we give pleasure, so this particular picture gave an enormous amount of pleasure, and it still does.

"I was back in Arkansas a little while ago," she continued, recounting a recent trip she took to her home town, "and the grandson of one of my friends I went to school with—this is his fa-

vorite movie, and it was a big thing to go over to the house to say hello to this little boy. He's at the age you saw it, and it's his favorite picture. Isn't that wild?"

Did she think the movie would have this lasting appeal? "Never. Not that I thought it was bad. I don't mean that. It was sort of a lark; you figure there were so many other pictures you feel as though you acted your heart out, and nobody remembers any of those," she laughs teasingly.

Throughout our interview, I couldn't help noting the quality of Adams' voice, which retains the warmth and vitality so evident in the CREATURE film. Still vivacious and effervescent, Adams remains active. Last year, she did a TV movie, THE TRIAL OF KITTY DODD. She has also appeared in quite a few episodes of MURDER SHE WROTE with Angela Lansbury, playing a recurring character, although she hasn't materialized lately. Her latest endeavor is a book about Arkansas. She explains, "I'm in the midst of writing what I would call a memoir, pertaining to a town in Arkansas that my family was part of the creation of. It will contain old family stories, the history of this particular town, and I'm very determined to finish it, *now!*" □

proficient skills of photographers James C. Haneas and Charles S. Welbourne. The splendid "water ballet" between the merman and the girl is a superbly synchronized piece of choreographic magic, enhanced by an eerie score composed by Joseph Gershenson and Henry Mancini. A cast of familiar genre faces—Richard Carlson, Richard Denning, and Whit Bissell—adorn this flick, with Julie Adams as the porcelain-skinned beauty, whom the creature becomes so intoxicatingly aroused by.

There were two different men, Ricou Browning and Ben Chapman, who posed as the humanoid amphibian in CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. Chapman was responsible for the on-land scenes shot at Universal's back lot, Browning for the spectacular underwater aquatics at Florida's Wakula Springs. Believe it or not, both names were omitted from the screen credits for a very unusual reason: Universal's head of publicity, Jack Smith, wanted to keep the truth submerged so that the public might believe that a "real" creature had been captured to star in the film. (As absurd as this sounds, a similar policy continues to this day at Disney, where officials refuse to name the actors inside costumed characters, for fear of revealing that the characters aren't "real.")

Ricou Browning reprised the role in the two sequels. Chapman, on the other hand, wasn't asked back, even though he did an excellent job. Tom Hennesy took his place, with John Lamb contributing to some of the on-land scenes; Don McGowan took over in the final film. According to Browning, he still didn't receive screen credit for either sequel but opted for promotional publicity instead. "They kept to their word, lavishing me with ample publicity and doing a fantastic job of it," he recalled recently. "The outcome was more than satisfactory."

CREATURE was basically his first film. "I was attending Florida State University, when a friend of mine called and said there was a group looking for a location to do a film at Wakula Springs. He asked if I would

RICOU BROWNING

“I’m surprised it became as popular as it did. It was considered a B-class horror film, and 10 years later you never heard about it. Now, it seems everybody is interested.”

show them around, because he was unable to do so at the time, and I was familiar with the surroundings, having worked with him before in the water in various capacities. I took these folks and showed them the Springs. While they went underwater to survey the location, the cameraman asked if I’d swim in front of the camera in order for them to get some perspective on the size of the Springs, logs, etc. I agreed; then a week later I received a call from Jack Arnold, who liked my swimming and wondered if I would like to play the Creature.”

Two Creature costumes were made, at a cost of \$12,000. Jack Kevan was the actual designer; but Bud Westmore, being the head of the Makeup Department, received most of the credit. While wearing the Creature suits, both Browning and Chapman had vision problems, although for different reasons. Various artificial eyes were utilized on Chapman to create different effects, including close-up lenses that rendered him visionless, thereby necessitating that his movements be directed with the beams from flashlights. Browning, on the other hand, had quite a different problem.

“I didn’t wear lenses that popped in and out like Chapman,” he explained. “A face mask wasn’t applicable under the Creature-head because it was just too bulky, and goggles were out of the question, as they didn’t afford a pressure release when going deep. I had no choice but to swim underwater with the naked eye, while the eyes of the suit-head were only about an inch away, thus creating a blurry, keyhole illusion while looking onto my surroundings. As far as being able to breathe in deep water, there was no room to put a tank inside the outfit. [I made a] suggestion, having had prior experience with hose breathing in the ‘Wee-

ki Watchi Springs Shows,’ which I myself had executed. How it worked in the CREATURE film was with the assistance of safety men on opposite sides. Before the scene, I would breathe off one hose; then I’d do the scene, then get air from another safety man on the other side. The signal for them to bring me air was when I’d remain still and let my body totally relax. Polly Burson shared this experience with me.”

When asked if he had a funny story to tell about the filming, Browning recalled an incident during the second feature, REVENGE OF THE CREATURE. “While I was shooting underwater at Marineland Studios, a turtle swam up behind me and bit the sponge-rubber heel off the suit. I wasn’t bothered or hurt, just surprised as everyone else, as the turtle swam off with it. Because they didn’t have any replacement feet on reserve, some of the crew had to chase the turtle down, get the foot, and sew it back on. There was a slight delay in shooting because of that, but all worked out fine.”

Browning’s fondest memory of CREATURE was the outstanding cast. “Julie Adams was a super lady; and Denning, Carlson, and Chapman were also enjoyable to work with. Not a bad egg in the bunch!” Browning calls director Jack Arnold, (who died a few years ago) “super,” adding, “I did some other films with him: HELLO DOWN THERE, an underwater comedy, in which I directed the second unit photography.” (Browning made the transition to directing while working as a stunt man for Ivan Torres on SEA HUNT, then went on to create FLIPPER, which is currently getting the big-screen remake treatment.)

What does he think of being interviewed so many years later after the fact? “I take it with a



grain of salt. It was a very minor thing as far as my career is concerned, and besides it didn’t pay very well. I’m really very surprised that it became as popular as it did. It was considered a B-class horror film at the time, and then I guess around 10 to 15 years later, you never heard anything about it. Just lately, though, it seems everybody is interested in it.” As part of this renewed interest, MCA Universal released the CREATURE TRILOGY for their *Monster Series* Collection.

CREATURE is as much a marvelous production today as when I first saw it, but my perception is different. I don’t view the Creature as just a scary monster anymore; behind the frightfully primitive maquillage that we first see, there is more: a heart and soul that transcends more and more as I get older. As a child, there are no hidden meanings; everything is in black or white, with nothing in between. It’s only later that true “darkness” in THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON becomes apparent. The “gillman” was as vulnerable as he was strong, and should have been left to freedom in the safety of his own environment. The exploitation of the creature is a mere reflection of the dissidence that exists in our modern world. Being pursued forces the “gillman” to interact with a world he knows nothing about. It’s an intrusive invasion that leads us to question our conscious minds, our values, and the truth in our hearts. It’s a pathetic portrayal of sadness and unrequited love—a “beauty and the beast” story, if ever there

The original was popular enough to generate two sequels, the first being REVENGE OF THE CREATURE.

was—as the wounded creature walks slowly into the cool black waters of the lagoon, alone, a mere fragment of the remarkable being he once was.

CREATURE became one of Universal’s most celebrated and successful monster films, earning \$3 million by the time the movie closed in 1954. Due to the box office success, Universal provided the public with two “eye-popping” sequels. The first was 1955’s REVENGE OF THE CREATURE, also in 3-D, wherein the gillman is captured and put on display at a Marine Park, only to escape and abduct another beautiful female scientist (Lori Nelson). Arnold takes the helm once more for this sequel, along with producer William Alland. Featured here is veteran actor John Agar, Nestor Paiva reprises his role as Captain, and Clint Eastwood makes his first screen appearance as a lab technician. The series concluded with 1956’s THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US, starring Jeff Morrow, Rex Reason, and Leigh Snowden. Directed by John Sherwood this time, and written by Arthur Ross.

In the first two films the gillman was able to bounce back to challenge yet another group of scientific researchers, but with this final entry, there is an unsurmountable feeling of hopelessness in his not being able to return to the sea. I couldn’t help wishing for a fourth creature

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Behind the scenes of Disney's first historical animated adventure: POCAHONTAS

By Michael Lyons

POCAHONTAS marks the first time that a Disney animated feature has been based on historical events, and the filmmakers took extra pains during their research to get all the aspects correct. "We really wanted to present certain things in this film as interesting to our audience," said co-director, Eric Goldberg, who previously had served as the supervising animator for the Genie in ALADDIN. "It would have been



Left: directors Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Above: Ratcliffe's exuberant show-stopping song "Mine, Mine, Mine."



very easy for us to make a film that included tepees, totem poles, and long, feathery head dresses, the way most people are used to seeing those images from Southwest American Indians. But, we didn't want to do that." Part of the research included numerous visits to Jamestown, Virginia as well as interviews with Native Americans. "We met with surviving members of the Powhatan nation," said Goldberg. "We spoke to them and got a kind of flavor of what they were like, what they found important. They found a sense of community very important and they wanted to see that portrayed in the film."

While conducting his research, Ruben Aquino, who served as supervising animator for Chief Powhatan, came across a unique trait of the Powhatan tribe. "It was common for the warriors of that tribe, or many of the tribes in that area, to shave only one side of their head," he says. "Someone doing the research said it was because a lot of them were archers. So, to keep the bow arm free and to keep the hair out of the bow

string, they shaved the hair on that side. It gives them a strange, almost punk, look."

The filmmakers concocted a very unique look for the film. "The design of the characters, the design of the backgrounds, and the general tone of the movie is completely unforgiving," said Goldberg. "The design itself is very crisp: there aren't a lot of round edges and circles and things that are squashy and stretchy, that you have a lot of cartoon liberty with. So, it means that every little nick and pop in the animation, that's a mistake, will show. It really was a daunting task we set for everybody." This style, similar to that used in SLEEPING BEAUTY (1959), placed a great deal of responsibility on the studio's clean-up artists, the craftspeople who refine the rough animation drawings. With POCAHONTAS "perfect" look, their job was even more challenging. "I'm going to see to it that there not unsung heroes," said Goldberg of the clean-up artists. "The draftsmanship was so demanding on this movie that to actually pull it off, with the subtlety of movement required is nothing short of Herculean."

As important as a film's look is, it's really nothing without good characters, and POCAHONTAS boasts some of the most in-depth characterization that Disney animation has ever seen. This is especially true of the film's title character. Glen Keane, who served

as the supervising animator for Pocahontas, said that there is a great deal going on "inside" Pocahontas: "It seems that, in so many of the scenes of Pocahontas, she's really not doing a whole heck of a lot. She's not running around; she's not talking a lot; she's not making faces; she's standing there, and she's looking, but she's not just looking—she sees." Keane added, "So much of it is this invisible calling, this thing that's inside of her that's making her follow this course throughout the whole film."

Ruben Aquino also found an internal struggle played a big part in the shaping of his character, Chief Powhatan. "When I was animating him, I wanted to emphasize the two sides of him," said Aquino. "One side being the chief side of him, the strong leader that everyone looked up to. He was kind to his people, but also perfectly willing to resort to warfare if he had to. Then, there is the other side of him that is the fatherly, warm, kind, gentle side that we see when he's with Pocahontas."

The characters' internal struggle is especially evident in one of POCAHONTAS' pivotal moments, when John Smith and Pocahontas meet for the first time. The scene plays out very quietly, by a waterfall, with movements so slight that it's easily one of animation's most ground-breaking moments. Eric Goldberg notes that Glen Keane

knew exactly how this scene should play out. "The sequence when Pocahontas and John Smith first meet under the waterfall is actually Glen's story boarding, and we veered very little from it." Keane then took his storyboard ideas and transposed a very personal moment into it. "The more I thought about it, I said, 'Well, how did it work out for me, when I met my wife?'" he explained. "It was kind of a love at first sight thing. I met her at a movie in 1972, in line to see THE GODFATHER. We were both seniors in high school, this girl was standing behind me and I turned around and she was there and I don't remember anything that she said. But, I remember that whole time; I remember the orange blossoms in the air, I remember the temperature, the feelings that were there. I thought this is what this moment has to be. It has to be something bigger than life, beyond just these two people standing there." Keane also added, "The place where they met was very important. To have it in front of this waterfall, with just the roar of the waterfall behind them, the mist slowly revealing Pocahontas, kind of like clouds swirling around, made it very ethereal." He also says that Pocahontas' first reaction to John Smith is one of mixed emotion, "She knows that she wants to run, but she also

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Not a historical document, but still great.

POCAHONTAS

A Walt Disney Pictures presentation. Directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Written by Carl Binder, Susannah Grant & Philip Lazechnik. Produced by James Pentecost. Associate producer: Baker Bloodworth. Art director: Michael Gaiamo. Editor: H. Lee Peterson. Music by Alan Menken. Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. 6/95, 80 mins. Rated: G.

Lon.....	Joe Baker
Thomas.....	Christian Bale
Pocahontas.....	Irene Bedard
Ben.....	Billy Connolly
Kocoum.....	James Apaumut Fall
John Smith.....	Mel Gibson
Grandmother Willow.....	Linda Hunt
Meeko.....	John Kassir
Pocahontas (singing voice).....	Judy Kuhn
Percy.....	Danny Mann
Powhatan.....	Russell Means
Governor Ratcliff/Wiggin.....	David Ogden Stiers
Nakoma.....	Michelle St. John
Kekata.....	Gordon Tootoosis
Flit.....	Frank Welker

by Michael Lyons

"Politically correct...historically inaccurate...too serious...blah, blah, blah." After all the hype and hoopla, when one finally sees POCAHONTAS, one feels a little like Timon, the meerket from THE LION KING, wanting to throw hands in the air and scream, "Did I miss something?" POCAHONTAS, simply, stated, is great storytelling, great animation, and, above all, great filmmaking.

The story (yes, we know it's not based *exactly* on historical events) centers on the romance that develops between the title character (voiced by Irene Bedard and sung by Judy Kuhn) and British soldier John Smith (Mel Gibson). Under the direction of Eric Goldberg and Mike Gabriel, POCAHONTAS is told not only with tremendous respect for Native American culture and philosophy, but also with some of the most stunning and memorable visual images ever to come out of the studio. Goldberg (a former supervising animator making his directorial debut) brings the same fast-paced timing to the entire story that he brought to the Genie in ALADDIN (especially in Ratcliffe's big musical number, "Mine, Mine, Mine"). Gabriel brings the epic sweep and awe-inspiring images of untouched nature that he showed in his last directing effort, THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER. For such a realistic story, the directors wisely chose a distinctly stylish look for POCAHONTAS, reminiscent of not only Disney's own SLEEPING BEAUTY but also the bold graphics of UPA studio's cartoon shorts of the '50s and '60s. The look of the characters range from the startlingly realistic Pocahontas and Smith to the more caricatured Ratcliffe. Don't worry—Disney didn't forget



Disney's newest animated heroine was matured for dramatic purposes—continuing the studio's trend away from passive princesses and naive girls.

this is an animated film, and provided great comic relief in the form of three supporting animals: Pocahontas' sidekicks Meeko the raccoon and Flit the hummingbird, and Ratcliffe's pampered pup Percy (who, oddly enough, bears a striking resemblance to JOHNNY QUEST'S pet dog, Bandit). Even though they don't speak, the characters continue the Disney tradition of providing laughs at just the right moments.

POCAHONTAS also continues another Disney tradition: Broadway-style songs. With music by Alan Menken and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, the film boasts probably the most eclectic selection in a Disney feature, ranging from the dramatic "Savages" to the memorable ballad and favorite of every Top 40 radio station, "Colors of the Wind."

The latter song also helps root

the film's message, stating that we must all learn to be more accepting of others, "whether we are white or copper-skinned." For such a mature theme, POCAHONTAS has also taken on the feel of a live-action film, with more subtle animation than ever seen before. When Pocahontas and John Smith meet for the first time, there is no warbling of "Some Day My Prince Will Come;" instead, the two stand in quiet defiance, each trying to make sense of the other. It's a testament to the work of all the animators of POCAHONTAS that the character actually seem to be not only acting but genuinely feeling their proper emotions.

It may not function as a historical document, but POCAHONTAS is a testament to how much Disney animation has grown in terms of story-telling, entertainment, and art. □

A.I.M. on WARPATH

In addition to hit singles, T-shirts, and toys, POCAHONTAS brought something else when it hit theatres: controversy. Historians cried that the film was not accurate, and Native Americans insisted it was racist.

In the Disney version, Pocahontas is a nubile, young woman who has a romance with John Smith. Historians pointed out that, in reality, Pocahontas was an adolescent, and Smith a portly soldier, burned out by the harshness of war. There is also doubt there was romance between the two.

Disney has not pretended that POCAHONTAS is a textbook; they used the two characters and their clashing worlds to introduce a *Romeo and Juliet*-style love story with a message to a new generation. Instead, many say that they may be opening this new generation to a poor education on the subject.

POCAHONTAS also opened a can of worms among the people the film celebrates. One group, the California-based, America Indian Movement (AIM), circulated pamphlets with the heading: "If You Want the Truth Do Not See Disney's POCAHONTAS." Fern Mathias, a Native American from the Sisseton-Wahteton Dakota Nation and Director of AIM's Southern California Chapter, explained, "I think America should be seeing Indian people as real people, instead of 'frozen' Indians. We're not 'frozen;' we're very much alive, and we're living in 1995. We have jobs; we're human beings."

Disney worked closely with Native Americans during pre-production of the film, to make sure POCAHONTAS portrayed the culture accurately. One of Pocahontas' descendants was a consultant on the film, and noted Native American activist Russell Means (who provides the voice of Chief Powhatan) is one of many who has given his stamp of approval to the film. To this, Mathias answered, "Wouldn't you get the stamp of approval from people who were paid?"

After years of stereotypical portrayals in Hollywood, such as "cowboy and injun" westerns and even Disney's PETER PAN (1953)—which includes the song "What Made the Red Man Red?"—POCAHONTAS at least displays Native Americans in a positive light. Mathias, however, doesn't feel this way, "I don't see anything positive in the song, 'Savages.' That's what [the audience] remember when you say that over and over. It's subliminal."

AIM had tried to get involved with the production, but to no avail. What would they have done differently? "You could have shown Indian people's real struggles," said Mathias. "That was left out. What they left in was the word 'savage,' which we're sick of hearing."

To say the least, reaction to POCAHONTAS has been, well, animated.

Mike Lyons

POCAHONTAS: Animator Glen Keane on the renaissance of Disney animation.

By Michael Lyons

Don't call Glen Keane an "actor with a pencil." That phrase, often used to describe animators, does not describe him. "I don't see myself as an animator," he said. "I see myself as an artist who chooses to animate because it's the most challenging, expressive medium in art right now."

When Keane started at Disney in 1974, he didn't know the expressive possibilities of the field. "The misconceptions I had about animation were things like, 'Well, you draw funny faces and cartoons,'" said Keane. "I found that animation is so far removed from that. We went into serious figure drawing classes, learned anatomy, learned about design; we did sculptures. It was like learning from the masters."

These masters were men like Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, Milt Kahl and Eric Larson—some of the studio's "Nine Old Men," who had worked on Disney's greatest films and were still there to teach a new generation of animators how to breathe life into their drawings. "Ollie used to say, 'Glen, when a character is thinking—stop! Don't move. Don't do anything. Just let them stop.' Because, you're showing that there's something going on inside when they're not doing anything else. It's when they're moving that they've made a decision. When a character is working in their mind, and you want the audience to crawl into their head and feel how they're feeling and thinking, just hold the

Animator Glen Keane.



Pocahontas is Keane's latest lead character, after Aladdin and the Beast.

character still."

Keane took his lessons and worked on *THE RESCUERS* and *PETE'S DRAGON*, but he came to the attention of animators and animation buffs alike with his work on 1981's *THE FOX AND THE HOUND*. As supervising animator, Keane created the climactic battle between Tod, the fox, and a grizzly bear. He then went on to animate Willie the Giant in *MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL* (1983), the wonderfully wicked Ratigan in *THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE* (1986), and the evil Sykes in 1988's *OLIVER AND COMPANY*.

It was with *THE LITTLE MERMAID* (1989), for which Keane animated the title character, that his artistry truly began to flourish. Visually, Keane created the beautiful "girl next door" (with fins, of course!) and gave her a personality that engaged audience empathy. For 1990's *THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER*, Glen switched gears to create Marahute, the golden eagle, and the following year, he handled the studio's most soul-searching character, the Beast in *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*. For this, Keane made numerous sketching trips to the zoo, borrowing the characteristics of different animals. For his next assignment, Glen found himself at the beach, sketching young men playing volleyball. The lean shape of their torsos became the look for the title character in *ALADDIN* (1992). Now, he has brought his unique style of animating to a title character once again, in *POCAHONTAS*, part of Disney's current animation resurgence.

"There have been two periods, and I think, possibly, we're moving into a third," he said of his 21 years at Disney. "The first ten years was very much an incubation period for a new generation. We weren't really given the opportunity to stretch our wings too much under an old management system, and the goal of those mentors was not so much to break into new directions but to pass on this baton, to teach and train a new group of artists."

Keane noted that this "incubation" came to an end with Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg's arrival. "The first thing that happened was that we were moved out of our very safe little nest there. They moved into the animation building, and we moved into some warehouses in Glendale. You had the feeling that you were like a rich kid in this sheltered environment, and finally your dad said, 'Okay, now go out and get a job!' You really felt like, 'I guess this is it; we really have to make it work.' The next ten years was jamming as much as we could produce into a ten-year period. Whereas one film came out every four years, now we were coming out with one every year. It seemed impossible that so much could be squeezed out of me," he added with a laugh.

Now that *POCAHONTAS* is completed, Keane is taking a much needed break: a year-long sabbatical in Paris. "I'm going to study figurative anatomy and sculpture. I would really love to come back, and take that and do much more with animation, in terms of it as an art form and expressing the beauty of drawing." □

knows that she wants to stay. She's been tracking and following him. There's this very subtle little thing, where her tension is just to lean off to screen right and run away, but, if you watch the scene, she slowly, very slowly, inches over to the left and her head drops down slightly, which says, 'I'm going to stay here for a moment.' Then, he moves a little bit, then she looks at his gun, he drops the gun. Everything is very, very subtle."

To add even more truth to the characters, the Disney studio once again lined up an impressive cast of voice actors. Native American actress Irene Bedard supplies the speaking voice for Pocahontas, while Judy Kuhn sings for the character. "Judy Kuhn was the first voice we had," said Keane. "She had this quality that gave depth to the way she sang. It wasn't the same as Jody Benson singing Ariel's part, which was a much brighter, younger kind of sound. Judy gave a more mature performance. We needed that kind of voice for the acting, and that's the quality that Irene gave. There was a maturity and a confidence in the way that her voice reads."

LAST OF THE MOHICANS' Russell Means lends his powerful voice to Chief Powhatan. "There's no way on earth that we could duplicate that kind of performance," said Goldberg. "He's a unique person, and his sound is very unique. It has such warmth and such strength to it that I think it really gave the character something that we never would have had without him."

Another aspect that *POCAHONTAS* shares with recent Disney features is a message for audiences to take away with them. "Thematically it's a very adult film," noted Aquino, "although I think it still appeals to a family audience." Co-director Mike Gabriel explained, "After the first song, 'Colors of the Wind,' was written, we came up with a more grandiose theme, which was: we must all learn to live together in harmony, or we will destroy ourselves. To me, it's as simple as: our similarities are much greater than our differences. Even though we like to rant and rave that we're all completely different and each nation and each culture has its own idiosyncrasies and separate ideas, I think what we show in the movie is that we're not all that different. We do a lot of shadow play in the film, visually, which, to me, shows that the shadow is more truth than the form casting it."

"We have to all extend toward

continued on page 60



It's not "Fishtar"—it's "The Water Warrior."

WATERWORLD

A Universal release of a Universal & Lawrence Gordon presentation of a Gordon Co./Davis Ent. Co./Licht/Mueller Film Corp. production. Produced by Charles Gordon, John Davis, Kevin Costner. Executive producers: Jeffrey Mueller, Andrew Licht, Iona Herzberg. Directed by Kevin Reynolds. Editor: Peter Boyle. Production designer: Dennis Gansner. Sound: Keith A. Wester. Art director: David Klassen. Set designer: Gary Diamond, Marco Rubeo, Natalie Richards, John Dexter, Paul Sonski, Darrell L. Wright. Visual effects supervisor: Michael J. McAlister. Costume designer: John Bloomfield. Music by James Newton Howard. Screenplay by Peter Radner, David Twohy. 7/95, 135 mins. Rating: PG-13.

Mariner.....	Kevin Costner
Deacon.....	Dennis Hopper
Helen.....	Jeanne Tripplehorn
Enola.....	Tina Majorino
Gregor.....	Michael Jeter
Nord.....	Gerard Murphy
Enforcer.....	R.D. Call
Doctorr.....	John Fleck

by Steve Biodrowski

The first thing that has to be said about WATERWORLD is that what's wrong with it has nothing to do with budgets, schedules, hurricanes, fallout between the two Kevins, or any other dramatic behind-the-scenes element which garnered this film so much attention during its production. There seems to be a natural predilection on the part of the Hollywood press to dramatize what goes on in the film industry, and good drama demands a good ending. It would seem fitting, therefore, to declare that this movie, with its reported budget of \$180 million, is a disastrous example of out-of-control studio spending.

Well, that ain't the way it turned out. Whatever was spent on this film was *well* spent, delivering goods worthy of a \$7 admission. This film contains some of the most astounding action scenes ever committed to celluloid; the sheer scale of spectacle involved is truly amazing, and it's doubtful that any viewers—except for the most grumpy sports—would leave theatres bored.

Nevertheless, there are substantial problems, but they're conceptual—that is, irrelevant to the travails of production that turned the press against this film before they ever saw it. What's wrong was wrong from the ground up, starting with the script, and it becomes most apparent whenever the action dies down and the characters start to speak.

I'm not one to moan about so-called "style over substance" or to insist that "all this needed was a really good script." When a film delivers action like this, a good story really isn't necessary. Unfortunately, the filmmakers themselves—like so many today—don't realize this. Instead of making a definite break



Costner underwhelms in the lead, but Hopper shines as the evil Deacon (inset).



with the conventions of three-act dramatic structure, they lumber around, vaguely trying to convince us that their mythic ambitions match the scale of the production. Despite this, there's barely any plot going on in here: the lead character is basically just trying to go about his business, and it's other forces that keep intruding and making him take action. Which would be fine, if the film would just cut to the chase.

But it doesn't. In between the set pieces are some of the most pointless dialogue scenes ever recorded—pointless, because characters keep talking about doing things that they never actually do. The Mariner (Costner) threatens to throw his sea-going hitch-hikers off his boat. The Deacon's thugs threaten to cut the MacGuffin tattoo off the back of the little girl (who's so obnoxious, incidentally, that we rather wish the Mariner *had* thrown her overboard). In order to convince us that the Mariner is a tough-guy, loner anti-hero, we get at least two scenes in which he lets his new passengers know he has no use for them. If ever there was a film that cried out for the fast-forward button so we could get to the good stuff, this is it.

As has been pointed out by other critics, the storyline is a point by point copy of THE ROAD WARRIOR, transposed from the desert to the ocean. The difference is that

George Miller and company managed to tell their story in two-thirds the time. Miller also had the advantage of Mel Gibson, who knows how to play a mythic loner who actually has something going on behind his stoic facade. Costner has proven his capacity for playing anti-heroes before (A PERFECT WORLD), but he brings little to the role here besides a vague kind of accent that is hardly an improvement over his attempt at sounding English in ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES.

Dennis Hopper, on the other hand, would seem to have played this role once too often, yet he manages to be a total delight. He really comes on as if playing a psycho villain were something fresh to him, and the only character-interaction scenes that have any interest belong to him. His verbal bullying of that obnoxious girl even gains him a certain vicarious audience empathy (too bad he never carries out any of his threats, however).

Ironically, this film is *almost* exactly like a previous effort written by David Twohy: last year's TERMINAL VELOCITY. That underrated item had a serviceable plot at best, but strung along its amazing highlights at a rapid fire clip and with tongue firmly in cheek. The difference with WATERWORLD is that, apparently, the magnitude of the production convinced the filmmakers

that seriousness was the order of the day, so they created a film that takes more than its time to get where its going, as if there really is something profound to be contemplated among all the explosions. Well, no, there isn't. And there's nothing in this film that couldn't have been conveyed in well under two hours.

Not to put all the blame on Twohy, director Kevin Reynolds' previous effort, the outrageously pretentious RAPA NUI, suffered from this same problem. Here, at least, he's surrounded his mythic pretensions with some of the most muscular thrills of his career, which goes a long way toward eclipsing his weakness in other areas (John Boorman he ain't). There's nothing wrong with film as action-painting. There's nothing wrong with using the most basic of stories as a framework for displays of virtuoso style. There's no reason to take something that could be lean, fast, and efficient and then slow it down with useless "dramatic" filler. The sooner filmmakers realize this and stop padding out their scripts with misguided attempts at developing the story, the better off we audiences will be. □

LASERBLAST

By Dennis Fischer

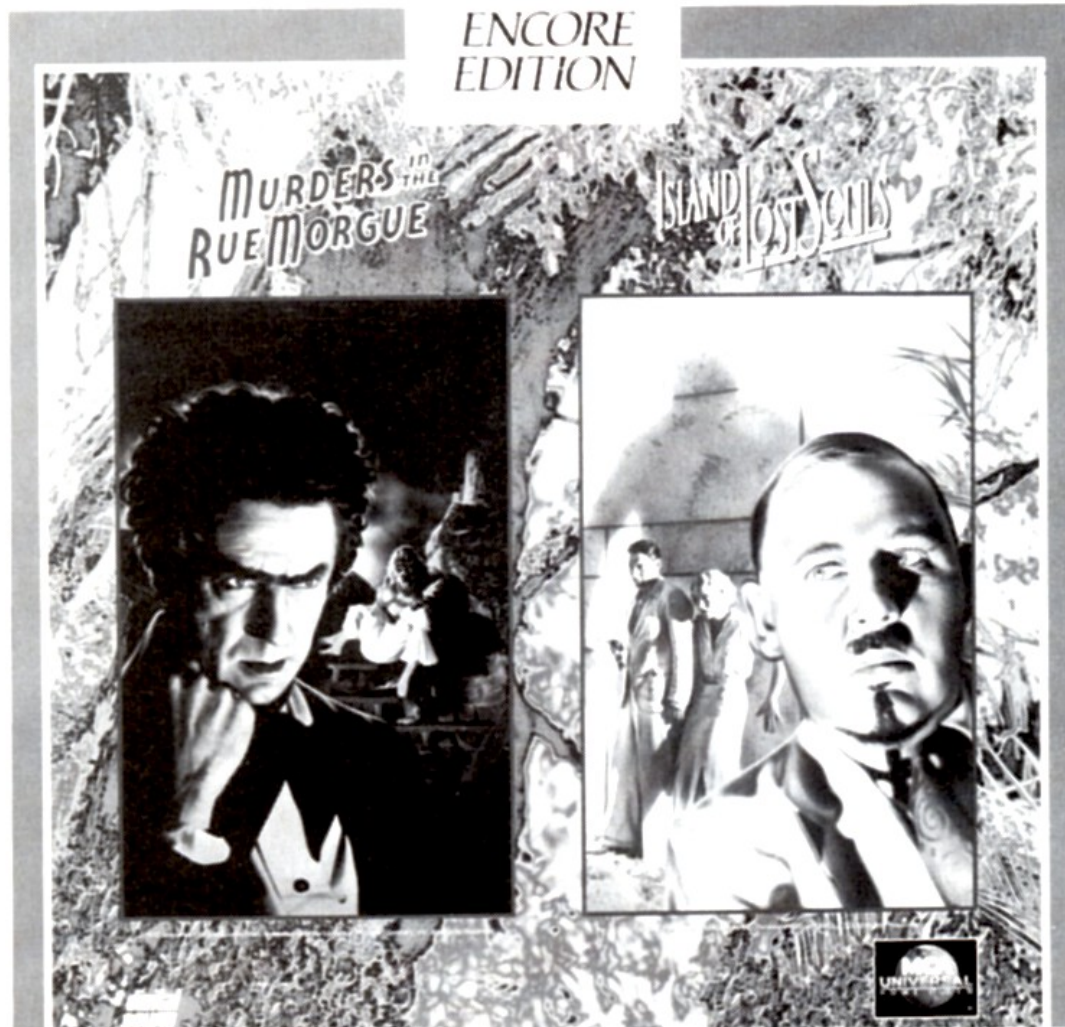
RUE MORGUE & LOST SOULS

Double madmen & monsters.

MCA has released a double bill of two of its best mad doctor movies: *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* and *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS*. In *MURDERS*, Bela Lugosi chews the scenery impressively as Dr. Mirakle, a man who correctly theorizes about man's evolutionary origin, but who also loonily decides to prove his theory by mixing the blood of a gorilla with that of a woman. The film is particularly notable for its expressionistic set designs which echo the madness of the main character who is eventually thwarted by a medical student (Leon Ames) when Mirakle orders his ape to make off with Ames' sweetheart (the charming Sidney Fox). Photographed by the great Karl Freund, this is the best horror film by director Robert Florey, Universal's original choice to direct *FRANKENSTEIN*.

ISLAND OF THE LOST SOULS, adapted from H. G. Wells' great anti-vivisectionist novel, is even better, featuring a superb and slyly naughty performance from Charles Laughton as the mad Dr. Moreau, who, through a series of painful operations transforms animals into men and hopes to prove his findings by having one of his creations mate with a shipwrecked sailor (Richard Arlen).

Karl Struss' gleaming photography is best appreciated in this laserdisc transfer from an excellent print that is a far cry from the dupey or foggy prints one often encountered in the past. The script is by Philip Wylie in collaboration with Waldemar Young. Wylie's numerous contributions to science fiction, both literary and visual, often are overlooked. In addition to this film, they include *The Murderer Invisible*, which provided inspiration for Whale's adaptation of *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, which Wylie did an early draft of; he also scripted the films *THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN*, *THE KING OF THE JUNGLE*, and *MURDERS IN THE ZOO*, provided the source novels for the films *GLADIATOR* and *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE*, and the script for "Los Angeles A.D. 2017," Steven Spielberg's science-fictional episode of *THE NAME OF THE GAME*. His novel *The Disappearance*, about how men and women suddenly find themselves in different parallel universes was optioned



Bela Lugosi stars in *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* and plays a supporting role to Charles Laughton in *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS*, two classic horror films.

by George Pal shortly before the filmmaker's death.

Laughton's performance turns Wells' Moreau into a sweating sadist, something which Wells strenuously objected to, but his intimations of sexual perversity is part of what makes the film so eminently watchable today. Bela Lugosi has a memorable bit as the leader of the Beast Men, and actors Randolph Scott and Alan Ladd have long been rumored to be among his followers under Wally Westmore's makeup.

Though the story has also been filmed under the titles *ILÉ D'EPOUVANTE*, *TERROR IS A MAN*, *TWILIGHT PEOPLE*, and *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*, this 1932 Paramount production remains the best film adaptation of Wells' entertaining yarn.

Though mad victimizers in monster movies are most often males, there are exceptions. Criterion has released Val Lewton's seminal work *CAT PEOPLE* (1942) on disc, which features informative commentary by critic Bruce Eder and a selection of re-issue trailers from four Lewton features as well. Simone Simon plays Irena Dubrovna, a Serbian girl suffering from a subtler form of madness, linked to sexual repression.

She falls in love with Oliver Reed (Kent Smith), but refuses to consummate the marriage for fear that she might lose control and turn into a deadly cat, as happened to some of her fellow villagers according to an ancient legend. Oliver proves exceedingly patient, but understandably wants his wife to see a psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis Judd (Tom Conway), who proves to have lecherous intentions of his own. This exquisite photography (by cinematographic master Nicholas Musuraca) is cannily filled with both cat and cage imagery throughout Irena's apartment, indicating the extent of her identification with feline savagery and feelings of entrapment, and in one startling shot she even simulates the position of a cat in heat while her frustrated husband is locked outside their bedroom door.

However, co-worker Alice's (Jane Randolph) attraction to Oliver brings out other catty qualities in Irena's psyche, causing her to give in to her evil side. The film deserves its reputation as a classic, thanks to its intelligent script, plus atmospheric direction by Jacques Tourneur, whose later work includes *CURSE OF THE DEMON* and *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*. □

FILM RATINGS

- Catch it opening night
- Worth seeing first run
- Wait for second-run
- Wait for video/cable
- Fodder for MST-3K

CASPER

Director: Brad Silberling. Universal, 5/95. Writers: Sherri Stoner, Deanna Oliver. With: Christina Ricci, Bill Pullman, Cathy Moriarty, Eric Idle.

What is the youth of America coming to today when having their tastes debased by this kind of junk? The cast is good but mostly wasted, and the special effects are technically superb but ultimately unimpressive, thanks to some poorly conceived design inconsistencies (the CGI for Pullman's brief embodiment as ghost looks as if it belongs in that "Money for Nothing" video from ten years ago). The script tries to cram way too many elements into the plot—do we really need to know about Kat (Ricci)'s problems adapting to a new school and meeting new friends?—with the result that none are properly developed. The mixture of silliness (Casper's ghostly uncles) with sentiment (the angelic last-act appearance of Kat's dead mother) is enough to make one gag. At least the production design is comically creepy, and Don Novello's early cameo does get a decent laugh—just about the film's only one. On the other hand, the six-year-olds in the audience really loved it. ● Steve Biodrowski

FUNNY BONES

Director: Peter Chelsom. Hollywood Pictures, 4/95, 118 mins, R. Writers: Chelsom & Peter Flannery. With: Oliver Platt, Jerry Lewis, Oliver Reed.

This muddled attempt at a sentimental dramatic comedy really shouldn't be in our pages: it earns its place by tossing in a fanciful MacGuffin that really doesn't belong. Tommy Fawkes (Platt) a young comic living in the shadow of his famous father (Lewis), returns to the seaside English town of his birth, looking for new material but finds some unpleasant revelations about his father's past. Chelsom's attempts to play this for melodrama is undone by his own misdirection: the film begins with a bungled smuggling operation in which one victim's feet are graphically severed—this results in some grim black humor as his comrades try to recover what little is left of his body, but the Monty Python hijinks clash with the rest of the movie. The contraband article is basically the Fountain of Youth (in powder form), being sought by Reed's shady character. In the comic climax, two aging vaudevillians overdose on the stuff, mistaking it for pancake makeup, and perform the world's great career revival ever. Not completely without entertainment value, but quite a mess. ● 1/2 Jay Stevenson

THE HUNTED

Director/writer: J. F. Lawton. Universal, 110 mins, 2/95, R. With: Christopher Lambert, John Lone, Joan Chen.

The writer of *PRETTY WOMAN* and *UNDER SIEGE* makes an interesting transition to directing with this mar-



Christina Ricci confronts Casper, who bears a striking resemblance to the Pillsbury Doughboy.

tial arts action film. Lambert's Paul Racine, an American everyman, has a one-night stand with a fatalistic femme (Chen) who is then assassinated by a ninja named Kinjo (Lone). In the melee, Lambert is wounded with a fatal poison which—in low doses—bridges the gap between this world and the next. While recuperating, he has visions of the slain woman's spirit, and the fanatical ninja comes to believe that his own strength will be weakened until this link with his victim is severed. That's the back story, anyway. The plot basically follows Lambert's outsider as he is introduced into an alien culture and learns to fend for himself amidst an ancient blood feud into which he's been thrown, a la *THE CHALLENGE* and countless others. Along the way, Lawton keeps the pace moving and the action level high, and he works hard to make Racine's climactic sword-to-sword confrontation with Kinjo believable. And midway through there's a show-stopping set piece in which a samurai with a score to settle against Kinjo (Yoshio Harada) comes to Racine's aid and battles a pack of ninja aboard a bullet train.

●●1/2 Steve Biodrowski

THE NET

Director: Irwin Winkler. Columbia. 112 mins. 7/95, PG-13. Writers: John Brancato, Michael Ferris. With: Sandra Bullock, Jeremy Northam, Dennis Miller, Diane Baker, Ken Howard.

A trendy thriller using computer technology as its hook, this has little going for it besides its premise and its star. The paranoia of having all evidence of your life wiped out by computer manipulation is effectively conveyed, and Bullock manages to maintain audience empathy. But the plotting and twists are rather formulaic, and

the direction seldom delivers real thrills. And of course, being a computer thriller, all our heroine has to do to solve everything at the ending is tap a few keys and download the MacGuffin disk which has been conveniently lying in a desk where she can get it—hardly the pinnacle of excitement. Still, despite its weaknesses, there are worse ways to spend two hours in a movie theatre.

●● Steve Biodrowski

THE PROPHECY

Writer/director: Gregory Widen. Dimension (Miramax). 8/95, 96 mins, R. With: Christopher Walken, Elias Koteas, Virginia Madsen, Eric Stoltz, Viggo Mortensen.

Better than *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*, this ambitious tale of a heavenly war waged on Earth attempts to take the bull (or should that be the Devil?) by the proverbial horns, exploring the sort of philosophic territory that elevates horror from children's fairy tale to adult myth. Gregory Widen joins the ranks of recent first-time directors Guillermo del Toro and Ernest Dickerson, whose debut efforts have surpassed the so-called established masters of the genre, such as Clive Barker and Stephen King.

Widen does a decent job of visualizing his ambitious script, although the mystery-thriller format of the plot is a tad too methodical at times. Also, the flashes of special effects that erupt throughout seem to hint at what might have been: a much larger film, on a scale that would truly do justice to the concept of an angelic war waged in heaven.

That said, at least the film delivers dramatically, with good performances all around. Koteas is fine in the Jason Miller role: a would-be priest who lost his faith and now must confront tangible evi-

dence of the existence of all the things he no longer believes. Walken is convincingly menacing as Gabriel, an Old Testament-style angel (the kind sent by God to slaughter the first-born and turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt), and Mortensen gives an interesting interpretation to Lucifer.

●●1/2 Steve Biodrowski

SPECIES

Director: Roger Donaldson. Writer: Dennis Feldman. MGM. 6/95, R. With: Ben Kingsley, Michael Madsen, Alfred Molina, Forest Whitaker.

It's no masterpiece, but after some of the schlock we've suffered through this year, it's nice to see a science fiction horror film that delivers the goods. Basically, it's *ALIEN* on Earth, featuring some of the best on-screen visualization of H.R. Giger's work since Ridley Scott piloted the *Nostromo* to stratospheric boxoffice success. The hunt-and-chase plot keeps the proceedings believably grounded, and the cast manages to make some sense of the of the pursuit team's character interaction, even when the script doesn't. Some plot threads are aban-

In *THE HUNTED*, a martial arts actioner with mystic overtones, Christopher Lambert is used as a bait by Yoshio Harada.



doned or not fully developed, and there are some annoying inconsistencies. But why gripe? Roger Donaldson knows how to keep things moving, and it's been too long since Hollywood let Giger create a new movie monster without the kind of backstabbing that marred *ALIEN*³.

●●1/2 Steve Biodrowski

ANIMATION

A GOOFY MOVIE

Director: John Flynn. Triumph. 4/94, 95 mins. R. Writer: Andrew Kevin Walker. Voices: Bill Farmer, Jason Marsden, Jim Cummings, Wallace Shawn.

Goofy is not exactly the leading man type. His anthropomorphized dog body, drooping ears, buck teeth, and trademark "Hyuck" laugh make one wonder why Disney chose him to headline a movie. After seeing *A GOOFY MOVIE*, you'll wonder why they didn't choose him sooner.

In truth, the film is just a big-screen "tie-in" for the TV series, *THE GOOF TROOP*, but it is a high quality and extremely entertaining "tie-in." Geared slightly more toward kids than the "entire family," *A GOOFY MOVIE* centers on the relationship between Goofy and his son, Max. Max, it seems, is deathly afraid that he's following too closely in the ol' man's footsteps (he even has a nightmare in which he morphs into Goofy). He has a chance to break the "Goof" mold when he gets a date with his dream girl. Dad, however, has other plans: wanting to spend more quality time with his son, he arranges a cross-country trip for the two of them. This throws a wrench into Max's love life and drives a wedge between the father and son. During the trip, of course, Goofy and Max learn that they really love and need each other.

Because it's set in present day, *A GOOFY MOVIE* lends itself to a great deal of contemporary, *SIMPSONS*-like satire. One scene in which Goofy takes Max to a possum-themed



Christopher Walken stars in *THE PROPHECY* as the renegade angel Gabriel.

amusement park has a few inside jabs at the Disney parks themselves. The film also manages to be a musical with songs that are serviceable, even if they don't advance the plot.

The animation isn't as lush as other recent Disney features like *THE LION KING*: it seems somewhat flat, and, oddly enough, two dimensional. The animation is, however, very fluid, and the fast-paced sight gags (of which there are a plenty) are carried off with such wonderful precision that the home video version will definitely require multiple frame-by-frame advances for animation buffs. The color palette is also very pleasing, as are the character designs (a Bigfoot that Goofy and Max meet while camping is the funniest thing this side of any Roger Rabbit cartoon).

In all, *A GOOFY MOVIE* is not in league with Disney's more recent classics, but it is, like the main character himself, great fun. You'd have to be a cynic, or a goof, not to like it. ●● Mike Lyons

A TROLL IN CENTRAL PARK

Director: Don Bluth. Warner Bros Home Video. 4/95, 76 mins. G. Voices: Cloris Leachman, Dom DeLuise.

Don Bluth's films are so well animated that watching them is often a frustrating experience. Each is imbued with so much artistic effort that you wish as much time had been taken with the script. *A TROLL IN CENTRAL PARK* is one of Bluth's latest attempts to break Disney's monopoly on the animation boxoffice.

The film centers on Stanley (DeLuise, in his forth voice for a Bluth film), the nicest of the

CINEMA

By Steve Biodrowski

FROM CLASS TO CRASS... Some of this year's little seen films.

population in the land of Trolls. Stanley has a "green thumb," which gives him the magical ability to grow flowers upon anything he touches. The evil queen Gnorga (Leachman), wanting no such niceties in the land, banishes Stanley to a place where no flowers grow: New York City. To Stanley's glee, he winds up in Central Park, the greenest part of all Manhattan (next to Wall Street), where he is befriended by two children. When Gnorga realizes Stanley isn't miserable in his punishment, she heads for New York to rectify the situation.

A TROLL IN CENTRAL PARK could have been a nice, modern-day fairy tale, but the story is riddled with missed opportunities (we never really see Manhattan, except for brief, background paintings). Ultimately, the film boils down to the standard hero vs. evil queen showdown that we've seen in numerous animated films. The character of Gnorga comes off as little more than a pale copy of Ursula, the sea-witch from THE LITTLE MERMAID, and never displays any true menace. Other characters are interesting, if unmemorable. Some of the talking and dancing flowers, however, come off as something out of an old Fleisher cartoon, and the denizens of the Troll planet look as if they sprang from the mind of Bakshi, not Bluth.

As with any Bluth outing, the top-notch animation helps carry the plot through its weakest moments. In addition, TROLL will no doubt appeal to kids, who have yet to care about such things as plot and character development. The film skipped a planned theatrical release, going directly to video. Like ROCK-A-DOODLE and THUMBELINA, it serves as another reminder that Don Bluth has, should, and hopefully will do better. ●● Mike Lyons

THE WINGS OF HONNEAMISE

Director-writer: Hiroyuki Yamaga. Tara Releasing. 3/95 (1987), 123 mins. Unrated. English dubbed. Voices: Robert Matthews, Melody Lee, Stevie Beeline, Lee Stone.

Visually awesome, albeit muddled, anime piece follows the first, faltering steps of a country's turbulent plunge into the space race. Set in an alternate universe (where humankind has yet to reach the stratosphere), the loose story centers on callow Royal Space Force cadet Shiro Lhadatt's quest to be first-man-into space. In spite of his own foibles and the government's dastardly plans to use the launch to touch off a war with a neighboring hostile state, Shiro, abetted by a (chaste) relationship with a devout young miss, gains maturity and vision as the countdown nears. A truly sumptuous piece of cell work, WINGS wins points for spectacle, but, like much anime, eschews linear storytelling logic for enthralling detail and diffuse humanism. Still, the movie is involving, with nail-biting suspense as the clock ticks down to the conflict-fraught launch. A scene in which our astronaut hero suffers a "lapse" and attempts to rape the angelic lass who inspires his spiritual rebirth seems to indicate that baseness and bravura are Nippon trade-offs, no matter how inspired the palette. ●● Todd French

Quick: name the film in which a bored, blonde, beautiful housewife, who doesn't enjoy sex with her husband, indulges in masochistic erotic fantasies; then, when she starts to live out this behavior in real life, she crosses paths with a dangerous killer, and tragedy ensues. If you said DRESSED TO KILL, you'd be right, but Brian DePalma's stroke of genius was to take the premise from an earlier film and transpose it to the horror genre. In BELLE DE JOUR (1967), there are no of psycho-horror trappings; instead, there is just a subtle, subversive assault on one woman's sexual repressions.

The film was re-released this summer by Mirimax, after an alleged 20-year absence from the screen (actually, it screened in Los Angeles in the early '80s). Upon viewing it again, it's clear that director Luis Bunuel's handling of the material is far more precise than DePalma's—and surprisingly coherent, coming from the director of AN ANDALUSIAN DOG and THE AGE OF GOLD. Although less obviously surreal than most of his other work, the film is still an assault on conventional expectations of realism, filled with unexplained bits of business (Severine [Catherine Deneuve]'s stuffed toy lion instead of a fur wrap at a fancy cafe) and incongruous lines of dialogue (people keep talking about dogs, but none are ever seen). The biggest break with "realism" occurs when the traditional, melodramatic denouement (Severine's husband is blinded by one of her lovers after she enters a life of prostitution) is simply and expediently overthrown by a miraculous and unexplained recovery. As an artist, Bunuel was too much an absurd anarchist to impose such guilt on a woman for learning to enjoy sex (even if not with her husband). The interesting thing is that, for all his iconoclastic approach, he doesn't seem interested in supplying an alternate dogma of his own to replace the bourgeois values he's attacking. The result is a truly liberating filmic experience, and a masterpiece of cinema. ●●●●

A strictly amateur effort, DRAGON'S GATE is not a Hong Kong import but a vanity release, shot on video and transferred to film for midnight screenings at one Los Angeles theatre. The story follows a yuppie (writer-director Daniel J. Coplan) whose girlfriend is mad because he



The erotic fantasies of Catherine Deneuve's bored housewife in Luis Bunuel's 1967 BELLE DE JOUR, re-released this summer, prefigure DRESSED TO KILL.

spends too much time practicing his swordsmanship instead of dancing with her. Fortunately for him, she gets kidnapped into another dimension, giving him a chance to put his skill to use and impress her at the same time. This muddled odyssey (most obstacles are defeated by chanting "Nam Myho Renge Kyo") all turns out to be a dream, and the masked figure who kidnapped the girl is really the protagonist's doppelganger, which he defeats. Then suddenly we shift back to the party from the film's beginning—was it all a dream?—but this time the loser actually works up the nerve to dance with his girlfriend. Metaphysically profound it's not, and we're left wondering why the guy just couldn't just loosen up with a drink or something. ○

SAFE is a strange limited-release offering from writer-director Tod Haynes. The premise is that some people, as exemplified by the lead character (Julianne Moore), are allergic to the 20th Century—or rather to elements prevalent in the environment in this modern machine age. This might sound like a typical science-fiction warning of the dangers of technology, but the film is more allegory, and the disease seems not meant to be taken literally.

Haynes has a certain cult familiarity due to last year's limited release, POISON, but before that he

created the truly bizarre and little-seen SUPERSTAR, which told the story of Karen Carpenter with Barbie dolls. (It was never really released, since the doll's manufacturer was less than thrilled). Comparisons between the two films are instructive, because they both deal with apparently healthy women victimized by apparently intangible maladies. Haynes, who is openly gay, obviously gets a kick out of a typical American family unit falling to pieces, and the irony of the title is that Moore's character seems to be "safe" from the very beginning, ensconced in a marriage to an affluent businessman. If anything, it appears that her illness is a reaction to the sterility of her boring middle-class life.

Unfortunately, the last act moves to a clinic which specializes in treating the disease, and nothing very interesting happens from then. In fact, Haynes seems to endorse the clinic's methods, reducing the film to the level of a disease-of-the-week TV movie. All the satire just fades away to nothing. But at least Moore's performance manages to maintain interest in a character who could have seemed like a pathetic hypochondriac (not to mention a living embodiment of a Barbie doll). ●●

Other limited releases worth checking out: FLUKE, A LITTLE PRINCESS, and STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN. More details later.

Bored of Illusions.

LORD OF ILLUSIONS

An MGM/US release of a United Artists Pictures presentation of a Seraphim production. Directed and written by Clive Barker. Produced by JoAnne Sellar, Barker. Executive producers, Steve Golin, Sigurjon Sighvatsson. Camera, Ronn Schmidt; editor, Alan Baumgarten; music, Simon Boswell; production designer, Stephen Hardie; art direction, Marc Fischella, Bruce Robert Hill; makeup & visual fx supervisor, Thomas C. Rainone; fx coordinator, Lou Carlucci, FTS EFX Inc. 8/95, 108 mins, R.

Harry D'Amour.....Scott Bakula
Philip Swann.....Kevin J. O'Connor
Dorothea.....Famke Janssen
Butterfield.....Barry Del Sherman
Nix.....Daniel Von Bargaen

by Steve Biodrowski

The horror film seems to be in a sorry state these days—emphasis on the word *seems*. A large part of the problem is that, because of overrated names attached, our attention is often focused on films that don't merit consideration, while more worthy but obscure works are relatively ignored. Is there anyone who would argue that LORD OF ILLUSIONS, judged solely on its quality as a film, deserved half the attention it received in the genre press because of Clive Barker's name? Had the film been made anonymously and screened without credits, would anyone have cared?

Barker's reputation is based less on cinematic than literary achievement, while several first-time horror film directors have surpassed his best directing efforts: Guillermo Del Toro with CRONOS, Jon Jacobs with THE GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES, Ernest B. Dickerson with DEMON KNIGHT, and most recently Gregory Widen with THE PROPHECY. Look at any of those efforts, and suddenly the genre doesn't seem to be on death's door.

Barker's latest effort to revive horror, on the other hand, is such a catalogue of filmic errors that it would be difficult to list them all; its greatest failing, however, is that it continues the unwanted genre tradition of sacrificing overall effectiveness in favor of cheap shock effects.

First off, the film is a weak attempt to combine horror and hard-boiled cliches (done to better effect in WICKED CITY). Not a bad idea, but to do that, one needs to construct a mystery plot worth pursuing, a task which is not really Barker's forte. D'Amour (Bakula) is dragged into the story by the most meager of plot devices, having been sent to Los Angeles on an irrelevant, poorly defined, and soon-forgotten insurance fraud case. Worse, although he is allegedly the protagonist, the film starts with a typical horror prologue,



Swann, the "Lord of Illusions," dies on stage—literally.

in which the villainous Nix (Von Bargaen) is dispatched by his one-time acolyte, Swann (O'Connor). So right off the bat, we're not discovering information along with Harry; we're a step ahead of him, waiting for him to catch up. Years later, Harry is hired by Dorothea (Janssen), Swann's wife, to discover the identity of the enemies pursuing her husband. It's bad enough we already know who these enemies are; but we later learn that Dorothea knows as well! All the exposition (and what little detective work there is) could have been circumvented if Dorothea had just leveled with Harry.

Not surprisingly, Nix's allies are planning to revive him. What is surprising is that Barker thinks this is a surprise, which he delays far too long and then presents to the audience as if it's astoundingly unex-

pected. This basic structure has been used before, as in Hammer Films' VAMPIRE CIRCUS (i.e., kill the monster in the prologue, then spend the rest of the film bringing him back for the climax). In any case, when Nix is dispatched not by being destroyed but by having a mask screwed on his face ("binding," is the word used to describe this action), it doesn't take a crystal ball to figure out that Nix will be *unbound* by the film's conclusion.

Of course, the obvious question is: why didn't Nix's acolytes revive him sooner. One of them tells us that he needed the intervening years to learn how, but when the revivification scene comes, the mask is simply unscrewed. It's hard to think of Nix as much of his threat if it took his followers a couple of decades to unravel that little conundrum.

Writer-director Clive Barker on launching Harry D'Amour as a horror hero franchise.

By Denise Dumars

Clive Barker sees Scott Bakula as having the right stuff to spearhead a series of films featuring Harry D'Amour, the detective who always ends up on the receiving end of supernatural mayhem. "He's great!" Barker said of Bakula. "He's handsome and believable." According to Barker, LORD OF ILLUSIONS is "scary, bloody, and violent, but it's also got the reassuring presence of Mr. Bakula right at its heart." Barker sees D'Amour as a suave, noirish version of THE NIGHT STALKER's Carl Kolchak. He wants the audience to think of him as "one of those characters you feel safe going into the dark with."

Barker has said before that we've seen all the modern horror film has to offer. Now he wants to show us something new—and he admits being tired of horror monster franchises. "What we've seen over and over again are horror series driven by villains: Jason, Freddy, the Alien, Pinhead, Candyman. Nothing wrong with that, and I've been responsible for a few of these, but I feel one of the problems with that is the law of diminishing returns. You can scare somebody with something one time, but can you scare them a second, third, fourth or fifth?"

How, then, does LORD OF ILLUSIONS change that? "It will be fresh to the cinema of horror," he said of the idea to make movies featuring the D'Amour. "If there is a series, Harry will go on to the next narrative, and there will be no more Nix, no more Swann, none of that stuff. We'll be off into different territory. It will be a horror series driven by the hero. That is a fresh tone, because the last 20 years we've had the horror series driven by the villains."

Indeed, it is hard to imagine a recent horror film with a more terrifying villain than Nix. Daniel Von Bargaen (who resembles Philip K. Dick on a really bad acid trip) portrays the cult leader as far more than just a Charles Manson type. Nix has more going for him than the obligatory charismatic cult-leader personality—he has actual magical powers.

That the film mixes magic with mystery makes it both a hybrid and a conundrum. "There's always this anxiety when you get a movie which is something of a hybrid," said Barker prior to the release. "I hope that we would be able to draw an audience from outside the genre. A lot of that, honestly, is in the hands of UA, the marketing people—it's how they go out and sell the movie. But if we can get to that audience, we definitely have a chance at something which will really appeal to people who don't think they like this kind of movie. The challenge is really getting the

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best of both worlds, making the thing work for the core audience and for the larger audience."

Before filming *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*, Barker finished *Everville*, the second book in a proposed trilogy called the "Book of the Art." Will the three volumes, which feature D'Amour, ever make it to the big screen? "I think it's too big. The narratives are too big, and Harry is one of those characters who I've gone back to several times. There'll be a third novel which will involve him...maybe that's all I'll do. Maybe there'll be a couple of more short stories. He's been a great way for me to get beneath the skin of some narratives. I've enjoyed that, massively, I like his presence, I like writing about him. Something about how sanguine he is in the face of these terrible things."

With writing, the creator is in control, but when movies are made virtually everyone on the set is collaborating in the process. Not every writer likes this, but Barker enjoys the contrast. "I finished writing *Everville* and went straight to pre-production on *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*. I'd had 14 months on *Everville*, and though it had been a very smooth book, it had still been 14 months, and it was so nice to go to a meeting with 25 other people and debate with them and making this thing together. It's a very different way to be creative, but it's fun for me, and it's a usefully humbling to be with other people who have a better idea, a better angle, a better way of looking at something. If I had to choose one business, I would choose writing, because that way what I write is basically what reaches the reader, but given that I am lucky enough to be able to do both, I'll continue to do both."

And while awaiting reaction to the idea of a new Harry D'Amour movie ("I certainly have a sequel in the works, in my head," he said), Barker's writing a new book on a subject as surprising as his decision to film *THIEF OF ALWAYS* as an animated musical. Clive Barker's next book will be about animals. Not just any animals, not just scary animals—though it is a horror story, in its own way. "It's a book about animals and extinction," he said. "I'm an animal lover, and I still see monstrous injustices being visited upon the animal world, and I wanted to write about that with some passion." □

Barker on the set of his latest effort *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*.



Above: Daniel Von Barga as portly, predatory Nix—no match for Pinhead. Right: Scott Bakula and Famke Janssen as the hapless hero and heroine.

By far the plot's biggest fault is Swann's "death"—which, not surprisingly, turns out to have been faked in an effort to escape Nix's vengeful minions. Barker bungles the actual scene as a director: instead of showing it from the point of view of the audience, who are being fooled, he shows it from the point of view of Swann. We simply can't believe this death as "real," because we never see the moment when it goes wrong. Swann seems to be extricating himself from his on-screen illusion perfectly well; then suddenly, for no apparent reason, the falling swords start impaling him. Considering that he's not just an illusionist but a magician with paranormal powers, you have to wonder why he doesn't levitate the swords.

Barker compounds the error by expecting us to believe that the police never figure out the ruse. (On the other hand, this is the Los Angeles Police Department, so maybe it's not so incredible.) Even worse, with a piece of lip service, Dorothea explains that there was no autopsy because that's the way Swann wanted it. As a matter of fact, whenever a death occurs in which the deceased was not attended by a physician, an autopsy is *mandatory*. If Barker wants to present this story as a *CHINATOWN*-type mystery, then he should know this kind of detail and come up with a better explanation. For God's sake, who declared Swann legally dead?

All of this serves to point up one of the film's many visual weaknesses. On stage, Swann is supposed to be practicing real magic, not illusions, and we the filmic audience are supposed to chuckle at the naivete of our on-screen counterparts, whose limited imaginations lead them to believe that the impos-

sible feats they're witnessing are somehow faked. The problem here is that none of Swann's non-illusions cannot be recreated by David Copperfield, leaving us to wonder why Swann needs real magic.

Barker's conception of the hard-boiled mystery conventions is also weak, as when D'Amour falls for Dorothea. This plot element, which seems included only because it's a cliché of the genre, goes nowhere, its arbitrary handling apparently symptomatic of Barker's disinterest in the dynamics of heterosexual relationships. (The author recently "came out" in an issue of *The Advocate*.) This would be bad enough on its own, but did Dorothea have to be such a useless, helpless character? Often, her only function seems to be getting pushed around and hit by a character that obviously appeals to Barker much more, Butterfield (Barry Del Sherman), the leather-clad S&M thug planning to revive Nix. The relationship that most interests the writer-director, however, is the submerged homoerotic one between Swann and Nix. Apparently, the latter's plan was to destroy every human on the planet except himself and Swann. What the two of them would have done then is left to our imagination.

Nix, old and paunchy, is a poor excuse for a villain supposedly capable of carrying out his threat. Let's face it: Barker's most popular contribution to horror film mythology, Pinhead, was more or less an accident—a supporting player in the first *HELLRAISER* who then went on to take over the sequels. When Barker actually sets out to create a memorable antagonist, the results aren't nearly as impressive.

Also annoying is the fact that D'Amour never really solves the

case—beyond figuring out that Swann's death was faked; despite Barker's insistence that the film is character driven, D'Amour's character is mostly irrelevant. The plot machinations simply force a climactic second confrontation between Nix and Swann (who would have made more sense as the protagonist, since the story is about what happens to him). Lots of special effects are on display, but they amount to sound and fury, signifying nothing. Particularly lame is Nix's dispatching of his minions, who sink into the ground, rather like those stunt men who sink into "quicksand" at the Wild West show



on the Universal Studios' tour. (In a ridiculous attempt at a "jump and grab" scare, Barker later has one of these supposedly dead victims suddenly reach for Dorothea. Apparently, Nix's acolytes are loyal to him even after he's tried to kill them; wouldn't it make more sense to make a vengeful grab at Nix?)

Admittedly, some of these objections could be leveled at films directed by Dario Argento. The difference is that Argento is a stylist whose visual flare ultimately serves as its own justification, whether or not the stories cohere. Barker, on the other hand, is unable to pull off scenes with the kind of panache that would make anyone want to overlook his faults as a screenwriter.

For all his reputation as a splatterpunk pioneer, he is not above using the crudest and least effective of techniques to try to keep his audience awake. The soundtrack is pumped up to annoying levels, to make up for the lack of excitement on screen, and villains are constantly pouncing out of the shadows. The effect becomes almost humorous, because our gun-wielding-heroes are constantly being surprised and disarmed by knife-wielding assailants. You start to wonder why anyone

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Dreddful Errors of Judgement.

BATMAN FOREVER

A Warner Bros. release of a Tim Burton production. Directed by Joel Schumacher. Produced by Burton, Peter Macgregor-Scott. Exec producers, Benjamin Melniker, Michael E. Uslan. Written by Lee Batchler & Janet Scott Batchler and Akiva Goldsman. Camera, Stephen Goldblatt; editor, Dennis Birkler; music, Elliot Goldenthal; production design, Barbar Ling; art direction, Chris Burian-Mohr, Joseph P. Lucky; costume, Bob Ringwood, Ingrid Ferrin; visual effects supervisor, John Dykstra; special effects coordinator, Tommy Fisher; special makeup, Rick Baker; key makeup Ve Neill. 6/95, 121 mins, PG-13.

Batman/Bruce Wayne.....Val Kilmer
Two-Face/Harvey Dent.....Tommy Lee Jones
The Riddler/Edward Nygma.....Jim Carrey
Robin/Dick Grayson.....Chris O'Donnell
Dr. Chase Meridian.....Nicole Kidman
Alfred.....Michael Gough
Commissioner Gordon.....Donald Sutherland
Sugar.....Drew Barrymore
Spice.....Debi Mazar

JUDGE DREDD

A Buena Vista release from Hollywood Pictures of Jan Edward R. Pressman/Cinergi production in association with Charles M. Lippincott. Directed by Danny Cannon. Produced by Lippincott, Beau E.L. Marks. Written by William Wisler, Steven E. de Souza; story by Michael De Luca, Wisler, based on the Judge Dredd characters created by John Wagner, Carlos Ezquerro. Camera, Adrian Biddle; editors, Alex Mackie, Harry Keramidas, Jeremy Gibbs; music, Alan Silvestri; production design, Nigel Phelps; supervising art director, Les Tomkins; art direction, Kevin Phipps, Don Dossett; costume, Emma Porteous; armour costume, Gianni Versace; visual fx supervisor, Joel Hynek; visual fx producer, Diane Pearlman; visual fx, Mass. Illusion; computer animation, Kleiser-Walczak Construction Co. 6/95, 96 mins, R.

Judge Dredd.....Sylvester Stallone
Rico.....Armand Assante
Judge Hershey.....Diane Lane
Fergie.....Rob Schneider
Ilsa.....Joan Chen
Judge Griffin.....Jurgen Prochnow
Judge Fargo.....Max Von Sydow
McGruder.....Joanna Miles
Olmeyer.....Balthazar Getty

By Steve Biodrowski

"Sugar" and "Spice" are not opposites. So why are they the names of Two-Face's girlfriends, when everything about him is supposed to be split into opposing dichotomies? Apparently, "Leather" and "Lace," the monikers used in the script, were deemed too suggestive for the family audience Warners was trying to woo back after the horrifically demented *BATMAN RETURNS*, so the safer names were substituted at the expense of logic. It's only one small detail, but it reveals the problem underlying the whole of *BATMAN FOREVER*: this is a film not designed to be the best piece of pop art it can possibly be, but calculated to draw the widest possible demographics, whether or not it satisfies any segment of the audience once they're in the theatre.

Actually, if this film had come directly after *BATMAN*, it would have been quite an appreciable improvement. On a superficial level, Joel Schumacher is a better action director than Tim Burton, and he also knows better how to negotiate his way through a production behemoth, serving up the requisite elements without any personal style or conviction to get in the way of the Hollywood hype.

Besides that, the script at last fills in the obviously blank: why is Batman a Bat? Not only that, but the writers even account for *why* the previous films didn't deal with this (the memory was repressed so deeply that Bruce Wayne himself didn't remember it). Fans of the comic book should appreciate this faithful nod to the character's origin.

Beyond this, however, the film is severely lacking. For all the colorful chase sequences, true excitement is lacking. The problem is that the action seldom advances the story and never changes the balance of power; after each getaway by the villains, things are pretty much as they were before. In fact, the proceedings gets downright repetitious, with numerous failed assassination attempts by Two-Face tossed in to break up the dramatic scenes.

The relationship between the new Batman (Kilmer) and Robin (O'Donnell) is well-handled, and Kidman's Dr. Meridian makes a serviceable combo of love interest and shrink (though no match for Michele Pfeiffer's Catwoman); even the ever-reliable Alfred (Gough) is given a more satisfying role, helping to cement the relationship between Wayne and Grayson. But the villains are a major let-down, and the obvious reason is that there is one too many: namely, Carrey's extraneous Riddler. Acting as the brains of the villainous duo, he never really convinces us of his

genius; worse, his origin story takes time away from Two-Face, the character who really motivates the story.

The film's whole point is to show a parallel between Batman and Robin. Two-Face is the character they share in common: Wayne's former friend, now a criminal responsible for the death of Grayson's family. Edward Nygma is frankly irrelevant to the story. Introducing him results in a structure even looser than that of *BATMAN RETURNS*; for all Carrey's over-the-top hijinx, he never really justifies the character's presence.

This summer's other big-budget comic book adaptation, *JUDGE DREDD*, lives up to its campaign ("Dredd June 30"); at least, we can be thankful for the truth in advertising. Unlike *BATMAN FOREVER*, this film fails to deliver on even the most superficial level to its intended audience: there's not a memorable thrill, set-piece, or stunt that would lead anyone to recommend this film.

Whatever technical qualities the film has, in terms of production design and visual effects, are wasted by an editing style that races by too fast to linger on anything, even when it's good. Compare flying scenes of the cityscape to those in *BLADERUNNER*, and wonder why we were so awed by Ridley Scott's film but unimpressed by Danny Cannon's. The reason is that Scott gave us an opportunity to appreciate the wonders of the future world created in his film.

Stallone is actually pretty decent as the emotionless epynomous

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Val Kilmer's younger, more agile Batman is a more convincingly physical than Michael Keaton's, but he doesn't bring a greater depth to the role.



Stallone actually isn't half bad as the Judge, but the film fails to deliver—even on the level of simple thrills.

Judge; he really manages to convey a character who is nothing more than the sum of his programming and who is starting to realize that his programmers didn't provide him with the full truth. Unfortunately, the plot is not about to follow this thread through to its logical conclusion, which would be to have Dredd turn against the very system he has supported. Instead, the system of Judges is portrayed (unconvincingly) as beneficent, despite strong on-screen evidence to the contrary. It's pretty clear from the riots and shootings on view (and I'm not the first critic to notice this) that the Judges aren't doing a good job of preventing violence; they're simply dispensing street justice without due process and violating civil rights. There are a couple of weak-kneed attempts to refute this, as when Von Sydow's Judge Fargo pleads that the judges should not become a means of oppression (here's a news flash: they already are!).

Although social conditions are blamed for the violence, there is no thought given to social change; in fact, these conditions are embraced because they justify Dredd's existence. Assuming that greater police power is the only answer, this is probably the most unapologetically totalitarian film to emerge in America for some time. (If you find this comment far-fetched, check out Stallone's own pro-police state comments in *CFQ* 26:5:18.) □

Directors Dave Borthwick and Peter Capaldi on THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB and FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

By Steve Biodrowski

Although THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB and FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE compliment each other perfectly, the two British films were created independently. First-time writer-director Peter Capaldi (whose acting credits include Ken Russell's campy LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM) conceived his Oscar-winning short because of a slip-of-the-tongue on the part of his wife. "She said, 'Franz Kafka's IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, when she meant to say, 'Frank Capra,'" explained Capaldi. "I thought they were two opposite characters—or seemingly opposite characters—and that it would be quite funny to make a film that could have that title."

Capaldi's film portrays the tortured genesis of the famous short story "Metamorphosis," satirizing the popular trend of trying to find real-life parallels with an author's fictional creations. "I wanted to poke fun at literary [analysis]. I mean, it's not Franz Kafka's fault that he has been the subject of a great deal of discussion and speculation. I think he is a very interesting writer, but in a way I wanted to make a film that didn't really say anything about that, because whatever one reads about Kafka, it always seems to be very sincere and very dry, and he



In a meeting of famous fairy tale characters, Tom Thumb teams up with Jack the Giant Killer, in THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB.

himself was far more interesting. And the whole concept of a Kafka world is very attractive visually. It has echoes with German Expressionism and silent movies, so I wanted to play around with all that."

Expressionism might seem a daunting task for a first-time director, but Capaldi said he was just doing what came naturally for the material. "I felt that stylistically it was all very interesting for me, so that I wasn't specifically saying to myself that I had a difficult task. I was actually trying to give myself areas of my own interest. It was difficult to write; it was difficult to structure it, to find the story and make it work, but the actual world we created—I felt quite at ease exploring that."

A la Monty Python (whom Capaldi calls "the unsung heroes of British cinema), much of the humor derives from the contrast between the convincing look of the rather somber production design and the manic action of the characters, particularly the lead. "I like doing that: on the one hand saying, 'This is terribly important' and on the other saying, 'Well, it's not really.' I always thought Kafka should be a cross between the way Bela Lugosi looks and the way Woody Allen acts. I thought Richard E. Grant did a great job of finding that place."

Left: Tom Thumb escapes from a secret laboratory carrying on grotesque experiments. Right: Tom and his father (Nick Upton).

One of the delights of the film is that Grant and the cast are allowed to push as far as possible without worrying about going too far. This was the result of Capaldi's experience as an actor: "I like that, because I'm a terrible ham. What is normal for me is way over the top for most people. It's a fantasy world, so as long as we stay in whatever parameters feel right, I think they should be allowed to go as far as they want, as long as it's truthful. The parameters were not set up; they [evolved] day by day. The film itself defined its borders."

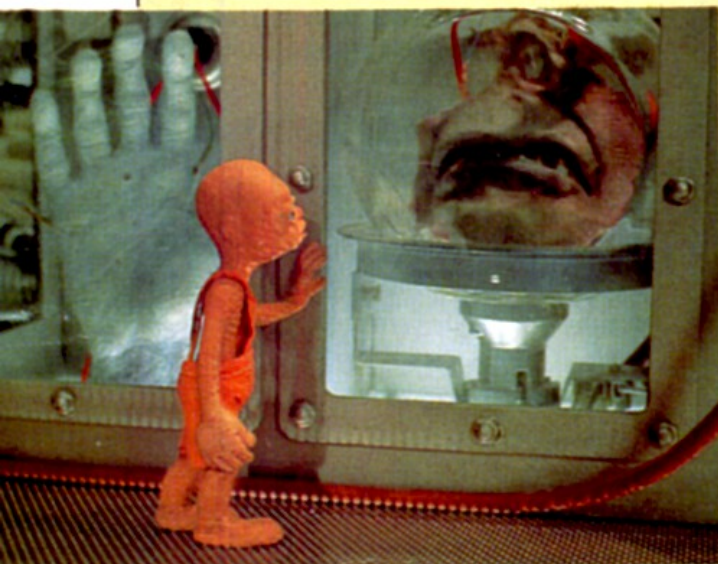
The animated THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB, on the other hand, was a pilot film for the BBC. "It was a bit of a fluke, a one-off project for them, because they were not really commissioning animation," said director Dave Borthwick, of Bolex Brothers studios. The project was conceived as a way of re-interpreting fairy tales. "The animation shorts we had been doing before had rather grotesque edges to them, and that could be a

way to rework the fairy tales a little bit, for adults."

Of course, the original fairy tales can be quite grotesque, but some of the impact is lost through familiarity only with Disneyized versions. "For me, that was the strong point," said Borthwick, "the idea that a lot of it is set in this never-never land, which is always a bit of a safe distance. Our idea was to make it a little more localized, to create an equally never-never land, but with elements in there that we might find uncomfortably familiar."

The film combines human actors with the animated puppets, not with split-screen or matte effects but by animating the actors. "On our short films prior to this, we got quite interested in pixilation and using human actors, basically because we couldn't afford real actors, so we started to [draft] the technical crew and integrated them with any ready-made doll things we could get our hands on, like G.I. Joes. I've always been interested in trying to take pixilation a little bit further, to get it out of the slap-stick category and work with it in a slightly more dramatic way, creating a character and sustaining a story. Up to that point, I never had an opportunity to try it seriously. TOM THUMB just seemed to be the perfect vehicle for human-size actors and models in the stop-frame mode."

Despite occasional spoken lines, the film is essentially silent, in that the visuals relay all the important information (if not always with precise clarity). "That was a conscious decision," said Borthwick. "I think, especially with animation, if you can tell the film visually, why resort to dialogue? If it's not necessary, there's always the danger that you start double-



Expressionistic Midnight Movie Double Bill.

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB

Tara Releasing and Manga Entertainment present a Bolx Brothers production. Conceived, written, edited & directed by Dave Borthwick. Produced by Richard Hutchison. Executive producer, Colin Rose. Associate producer, Hengameh Panahi. Key animators: Davie Borthwick, Frank Passingham, Lee Wilton. Music, The Startled Insects; "Tom Thumb" theme, John Paul Jones. Painted backgrounds: Tim Farrington, Bill Thurston; set drawings, Mark Brierly; model costumes, Jane Adams; makeup consultant, Jean Thurlow. 66 mins, unrated.

Pa.....Nick Upton
Mum.....Deborah Collard
Drunkard A.....Frank Passingham
Drunkard B.....John Schofield
Tom.....Himself

FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

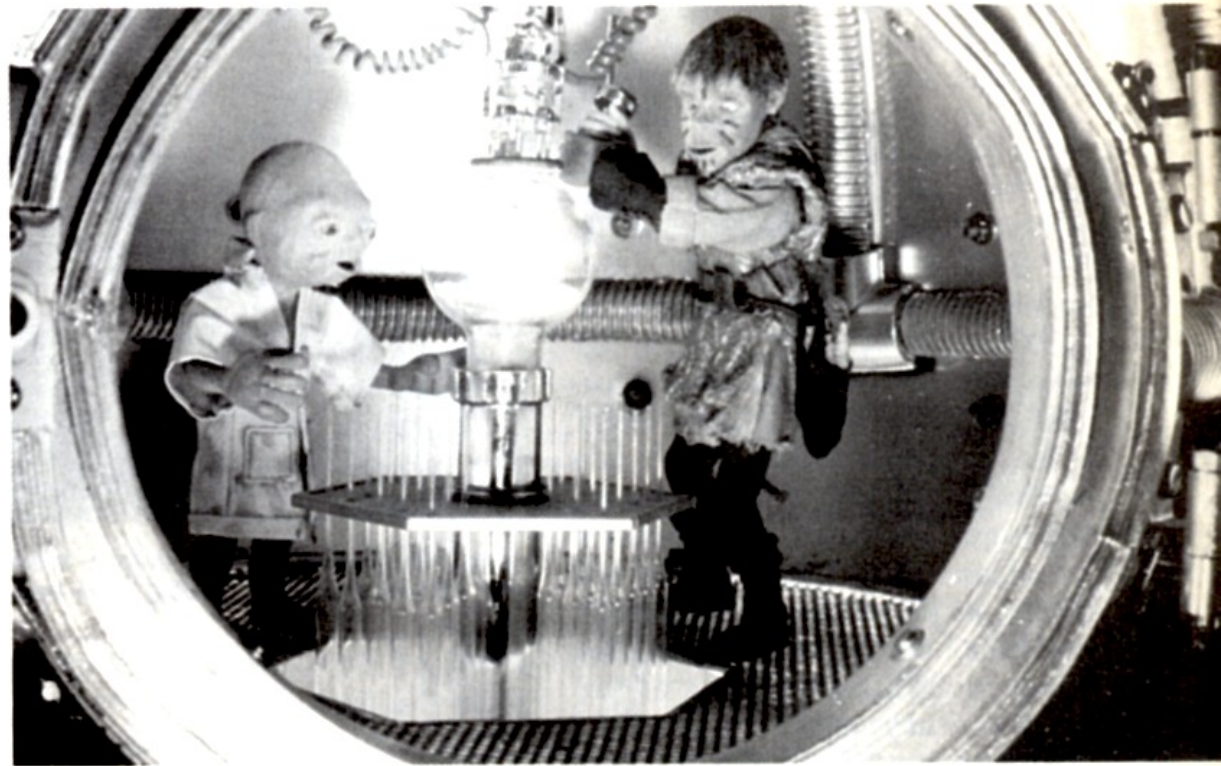
Tara Releasing and Manga Entertainment present a Scottish Film Production Fund/BBC Scotland Production. Written and directed by Peter Capaldi. Produced by Ruth Kenly-Letts. Associate producer, Mary Soan. Camera, Simon Maggs; editor, Nikki Clemens; music, Philip Appleby; production design, John Beard; special effects, Val Charlton; makeup, Christine Cant; costume, Hazel Pethig. 24 mins, unrated. Both films reviewed at Laemmle's Monica Theatre, Los Angeles, 1/95, 1/95

Franz Kafka.....Richard E. Grant
Gregor Samsa.....Crispin Letts
Woland.....Ken Stott
Miss Cicely.....Elaine Collins
Frau Bunofsky.....Phylliss Logan

by Steve Biodrowski

"Help! I've fallen asleep, and I can't wake up!" That might be the reaction of some to the nightmarish experience of sitting through *FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* and *THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB*. Thanks to independent Tara Releasing, earlier this year midnight moviegoers were treated to this unique double bill. Although the combined running times of the two films barely total 90 minutes, there is no shortage of bizarre enter-

Richard E. Grant provides a wonderfully manic portrait of artistic frustration in the title role of the short film, *FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*.



Tom Thumb leads Jack the Giant Killer into the core of the secret laboratory. Jack's destroying the energy source precipitates a 2001-type ending.

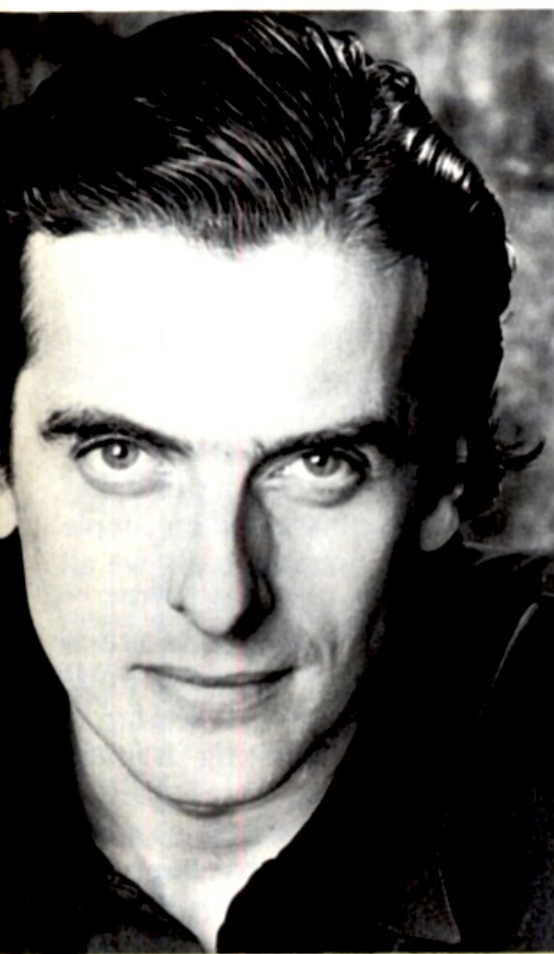
tainment value. Each film does a wonderful job of creating its own unique space—hauntingly familiar and yet twisted in horrible ways—and somehow the two areas intersect, resulting in a unified experience for the filmgoer.

Levned with humor, *WONDERFUL LIFE* is the lighter of the two, managing to sustain 24 minutes of hilarity and horror from the simplest of ideas: Kafka (Grant) is trying to write the first sentence of "Metamorphosis," and for us in the audience the result is obviously inevitable (in case we don't remember, the film provides the sentence: "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gi-

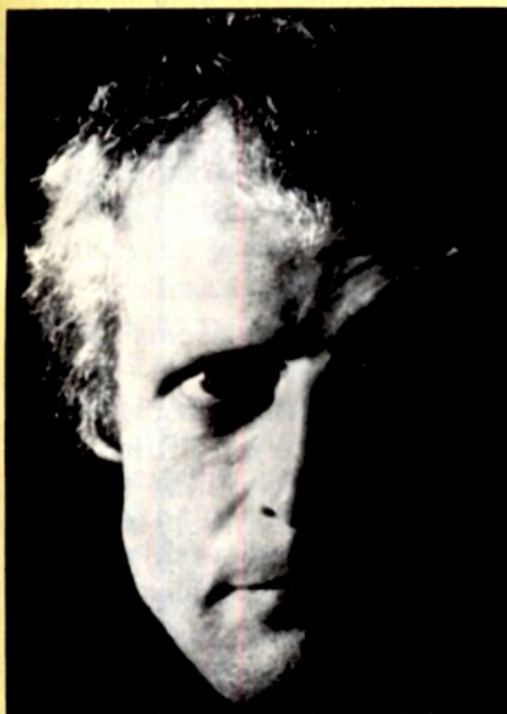
gantic insect"). Poor Franz, however, just can't seem to get it right, until he has a fateful and fatal encounter with a real cockroach ("Jiminy" by name) and its vengeful owner.

Even stranger is the feature that follows. *TOM THUMB* brings its diminutive hero to life with puppet animation, and the poor creature look like a deformed reject from *GUMBY*, born into a hostile and horrible world. Told with only fragmentary dialogue (nothing approaches a full-blown conversation), the film is demented but involving (imagine George Pal's *Puppetoons* as if directed by David Lynch). Little is explained, but the general idea sifts through the imagery, which is both repulsive and pathetic. Insects buzz constantly; secret laboratories conduct unspeakable experiments; their helpless mutant victims escape, only to be killed by uncomprehending outsiders who mistake them for monsters.

Wrapping up such a tale in a dramatic fashion presents difficulties, and Borthwick opts for the apocalyptic. Guided by Tom, Jack the Giant Killer (another fairy tale character who finds his way into this weird world) descends into the heart of the lab and sets off what appears to be a nuclear explosion. The result seems to be a world transformed from darkness and decay into sweetness and light, and yet the final image leaves one doubting that the apparent difference is real. There is no happy ending to this fairy tale, only the relief of waking up. □



Above: Peter Capaldi, director of the Oscar-winning *FRANZ KAFKA'S IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*. Below: Dave Borthwick, director of *THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB*



stating. If you can do it visually, then you've got an international thing; you don't have to worry about subtitles."

This approach had its difficulties. "There were parts when I thought, 'I'm not going to get this over; it's a bit too complex.' For example, when Tom meets Jack, I was trying to get over Jack's intention: what he really wanted to use Tom for was to get into the lab and destroy the giants. I wrote a sequence of them gazing into the fire, the way you fantasize while staring at flames; I set in there some key images, and just that little fantasy piece for me set up a lot of that information in a much more interesting way. I really love

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BIBLIOfANTASTIQUE

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dents of Browning's preferred genre, but by all readers with an interest in the history of American entertainment.

While Browning's biographers extract fact from fiction, Christopher Bram uses documented facts as the starting point for his fictionalized portrayal of director James Whale in his latest novel, *Father of Frankenstein*. Whale was, of course, the director of both *FRANKENSTEIN* and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, as well as the memorable 1936 film adaptation of *SHOWBOAT*. But *Father of Frankenstein* is a great deal more than a speculative biography. Bram is less concerned with Whale's life in Hollywood than with the enduring significance of the director's creations. The Monster and his Bride, as played by Boris Karloff and Elsa Lanchester, are among the most recognizable icons of the 20th century, and Bram's novel draws a series of complex parallels between Whale's creatures and the aspects of human experience which they seem to represent.

Blending reality with purely imaginative elements, *Father of Frankenstein* is set in the closing days of Whale's life, following his series of mild but incapacitating strokes. The story details Whale's curious friendship with the fictional character of gardener Clayton Boone, who is fascinated first by his employer's celebrity and then moved to compassion by his wisdom and humour. Bram handles his characters with sensitivity and insight, as the hearty, homophobic Boone overcomes his own misgivings to reach toward an understanding of the aging, frail, homosexual Whale and their common humanity.

Both Boone and Whale are tortured creatures, the former learning to live, the latter searching for a way to die, and their story makes for fascinating and disturbing reading. Bram takes an uncompromising look at the failures of mind and body which attend old age and the awareness of approaching death. When Whale meets Karloff and his grandniece at a Hollywood garden party, the director is horrified by his own resemblance to the infant girl: "She can focus nothing. Her memory holds nothing. Experience pours straight through her. Looking at such helplessness is like falling into nothingness. This is how we began." Whale thinks, "This is how I will end. This helpless unreality is my future. The thing squirming in Karloff's arms grows more alarming, more terrible." Whale's mind has become fragmented and disrupted; he is tormented by unbidden memo-



The final days of director James Whale (seen here with Boris Karloff in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* [1935]) have been fictionalized in *Father of Frankenstein*.

ries of lovers and friends from the past, and by the lonely bleakness of his present and future. Contrary to his intentions, he finds himself confessing to Boone, revealing episodes in his life that he himself has long forgotten—stories of his years working in the factories of industrial Britain, of his last failed love affair, and of the horrors of the trenches at Ypres. Like a drowning man whose life flashes before his eyes at the moment of death, Whale relives times of both joy and misery, reintegrating his lost past into a whole self that can die with dignity.

Boone, too, is a fragmented man, his failures and disappointments alienating him from others and standing in the way of self-acceptance. Even his name, Clay, suggests his lack of a clear form, the ease with which he is manipulated and upset by others. Whale shatters his conventional views of sexuality and masculinity: "It should be pathetic, disgusting, but Clay can't help being moved. So many things that should be opposites, manliness and mush, war and perversion, barbed wire and tenderness, run together here." It is the growing respect and responsibility he feels for Whale which allows him to finally expose his own fears and frailties in a friendship which, at the extremity of life and death, is more intimate than any love affair.

Throughout Bram's novel, Whale's cinematic monsters hover in the background, alternately threatening and pathetic. Like his protagonists they too, search for meaning and identity. They are the sums of parts brought together by others for purposes unfathomable to them, and they are doomed to seek love and affection in an unwelcoming world which they can-

not trust. They are confused by their hatreds and their desires, and driven finally by despair to their ends—Frankenstein's monster embracing death, and his bride perishing in rejection of her own nature and the love she was made for.

Do Whale and Boone fare better than their allegorical counterparts? One could argue the point, but it is probably unnecessary. What Bram tells us, ultimately, is that life, love, and mortality are mysteries—and sometimes monsters—with which we all must struggle, and that the antidotes to our sufferings may be found in the most unlikely places, even in the midst of war, sickness, and fear, in our moments of connection with other creatures like ourselves. That he has done so with such wit, style, and compassion proves him a writer of great talent and maturity. Read this novel. I think the father of Frankenstein would have liked it. □

POCAHONTAS

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each other; we all have to meet each other half way and understand what the other person's point of view is," added Eric Goldberg. "What I don't want is for people to feel the film is preachy, but I do feel that the film has a theme to it, which is timely."

While *POCAHONTAS* does share the aspects of famous voices, music and a message with other Disney films, there is much about it that makes the film distinct. "More or less, we're tried to make the most real movie we've ever made," said animator Elliot Bour. "The way that we're animating it, *POCAHONTAS* could be a live-action movie." Another Disney animator, Tom Bancroft, added, "We look at a film in storyboard or

script form, and if we say, 'There's nothing here, magic-wise—why should we make this in animation?' usually we don't do it. In this case we said, 'What if we did make a film that could be done in live action?'"

"We've tried, in a way, to keep it elegant and sophisticated in terms of its movement and even the proportioning of the characters," said Goldberg. "Early on, we said, 'Let's proportion Pocahontas like a real human, so that her head isn't one-fourth of her body, they way a lot of cartoon heroines are.' Pocahontas is a very different thing, because it's based on people who existed at one time. So we all treated the story differently."

Glen Keane said this made *POCAHONTAS* a tremendous challenge. "We were trying to communicate our acting in much more subtle ways, which usually you don't do, except in live action. This has really moved us to ground that was forbidden before for animators: you don't try to do those subtle things because the audience won't be able to see it; you have to go with exaggerated expressions. But I've never believed that. I've always felt that animation is an art form, and the subtle smile on the Mona Lisa is not just reserved for that painting; let's do that in animation too. That's exactly what our goal was in this film." □

ILLUSIONS

continued from page 56

even carries a gun—it seems like just asking for trouble!

Barker simply hasn't displayed what it takes to be a good film director. (Someone like John Carpenter, even in a relatively weak effort like *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, shows far more cinematic craftsmanship.) There is always hope for improvement, but Barker's literary credentials are already more than enough to earn his place in genre history—he doesn't need to make great films as well. If he loves the medium, he can collaborate with talented directors or option his material and act as an executive producer. After all, this approach resulted in *CANDYMAN*, still the best Barker adaptation yet. □

DOUBLE BILL

continued from page 59

narrative that leaves space for the interpretation of the spectator. The film experience can quite often disengage the imagination, because it's all laid out for you; one way to engage that imagination is to leave a little more room for the various interpretations that people come up with."

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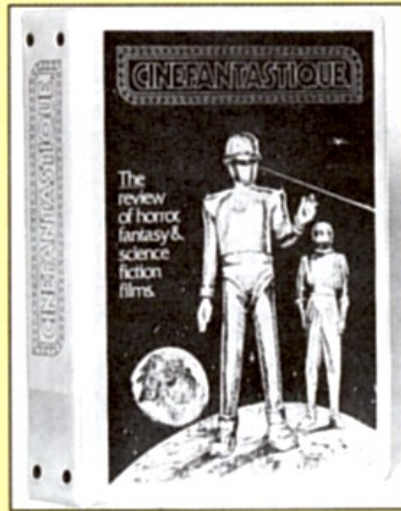
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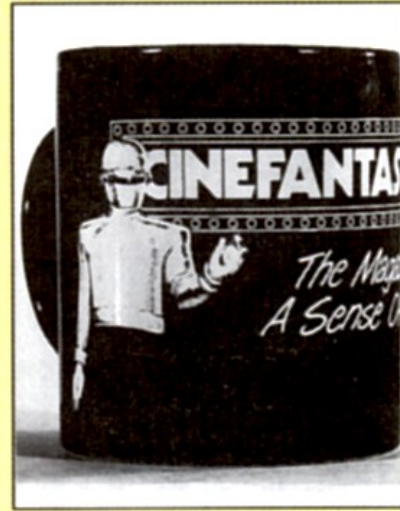
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be a pilot for a series of six ten-minute films, to be broadcast on BBC-TV, but the response to the initial installment ended that plan. "It got rather a shocked reaction, because it was to be put out at Christmas and because they thought an animation film was a kiddie film. Despite that, I was very encouraged by the results we got. After a little delay because of the initial reactions, we were able to take the script a little further. Each [ten-minute film] would have been a different fairy tale, but once I started developing the pilot, there was a lot more possibility to extend Tom Thumb's adventure, rather than having a different story next week. Thankfully for me, I'd always hoped it would be shown in one hour; during the fine cut, the editor from the BBC sat in with me and said, 'This looks fine as a one-hour show.'"

Although designed for television, Borthwick's film shows no sign of ten-minute act breaks in its theatrical cut, and the director is quite pleased that it found a second life on the big screen. Also, he couldn't be happier with the selection of Capaldi's film as a companion piece. "In terms of a piece of programming, I was really amazed by the similarity of the feel and atmosphere," said Borthwick, "even down to details like the bugs and insects and the cityscape. It's like the two films could have happened in the same

location."

DUSK TILL DAWN

continued from page 4

Transylvanian vampires. He also chose to give the principle characters a lot more depth, before their unavoidable descent into the realm of bloodthirsty beings. "When I read it, the first thing that hit me was, 'Oh wow! This is like the desperate hour of vampires,' and I love desperate-hour movies," said Tarantino. "The original treatment was only about six pages long. The first page was just kind of getting the Gecko's together with the family and then on to the Titty Twister. The next five pages was detailing the Titty Twister to the end.

"Well, I changed that. I really wanted to establish the Geckos and the Fullers before putting them together, then really hang out with all of them for awhile until the vampires come in—which happens on page 70 [of the script] now. Until the vampires come in, there's no hint that it's going to be a horror film whatsoever. In the first hour of the movie, it's just a complete straight ahead suspense thriller action film. And, then with a turn of a page—boom, you're right in the middle of Hell, fighting monsters."

The script lay dormant for years, while Tarantino went on to write and direct RESERVOIR DOGS and PULP FICTION. In 1994, during a one-day shoot on the ultra-vi-

olent DESPERADO, Rodriguez's sequel to his low-budget wonder, EL MARIACHI, Tarantino convinced the director to helm FROM DUSK TO DAWN, which he promised to rewrite.

Tarantino was anxious to bring Rodriguez to the production for several reasons. Having almost single-handedly produced, wrote, filmed, directed, and edited EL MARIACHI, Rodriguez was well versed in every aspect of film making. He was also comfortable in presenting stories based in the Mexican culture, an area in which Tarantino felt unsure of himself.

Rodriguez also has a rich comedic background in his award-winning student films and a daily cartoon strip, *Los Hooligans*, which he created and wrote in *The Daily Texan* newspaper. "I prefer doing comedy to serious drama," he admitted. "In fact, if I had to stick with one thing, it would be comedy. I can always include action in any film but I don't think I would ever do a really serious film. I just couldn't pull it off. I'd be too bored." □

BLACK LAGOON

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film, one that transforms him back into the glorious amphibian he once was—remove that ridiculous suit of clothes, breathe life into his damaged gills, and raise new scales on his pitifully charred body. My own mourning for the Creature

could then be laid to rest. For me, it was essential that he be returned to the black lagoon, where he was king of his mysterious and magical domain. This wondrous denizen of the Amazonian lagoon should have been left untouched—to be guarded, admired, and at the same time feared. □

CHAINSAW

continued from page 13

foolish. I think the characters are more dangerous, menacing, and frightening, and that they're more creditable. In a way, in this film, they're not quite as scary as in the original—in the sense that it doesn't have the same pop-up scary effect, almost by definition. But what it does have, I think, is a more horrifying and a more visceral sense of pervasive fear."

The film is virtually a remake partly because Henkel did not want to pick up from the intervening sequels. "I wanted to avoid the two middle pictures, because I did not feel that they took it in any direction that was of interest. I felt that what had followed really did not understand what made the original work. Given the length of time and the problem of intervening films, I had to go back and restart the process. In the best of all possible worlds, if I hadn't felt constrained in that way, I would like to have taken it another leap forward—truly a sequel—rather than what I have done." □

LETTERS

CORRECTION BOX

Regarding the animated *FIST OF THE NORTH STAR* [IM 2:4:32]: The plot of the movie is loosely related to the first 109 episodes of the Japanese TV series (which runs 152 episodes in all). But the animation is original to the movie, not edited down from the series.

Laurine White
Sacramento, CA

In his Beverly Garland profile (IM 3:1), Dennis Fischer describes *SWAMP WOMEN*, crediting Garland with the role of the undercover policewoman (actually played by Carole Mathews); Garland played one of the prison escapees. Fischer goes on to write that Garland "says she doesn't remember [THE NEANDERTHAL MAN]. This is not surprising to those who have actually bothered to investigate the film itself: there is no evidence of her either on screen or in the credits.

Garland *is* in the movie, and she's fifth-billed in the opening credits. She plays waitress Nola Mason, one of the first characters seen in the movie. Even if Fischer hasn't "actually bothered to investigate the film itself" (which he obviously hasn't), my 1985 *Fangoria* interview with Garland led off with a full-page shot of Garland in the Neanderthal Man's arms; photos of Garland and the monster have appeared in many other books; she's even pictured on the poster—twice!

Tom Weaver
North Tarrytown, NY

TO DUB OR NOT TO DUB

Having just read the Japanese Animation articles in IM 2:4, I'd like to compliment you for pointing out that there is a demand for subtitled releases, rather than just letting Carl Macek have the last word. Nevertheless, you left out one major criticism of dubbing: liberties are often taken with the scripts.

For example: In the original version of *FIST OF THE NORTH STAR*, the villain says something to the effect of "You win for now, but I'll be back!" making it at least slightly more plausible than his total 360 in the dub. In the original version of *CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO*, it's

revealed (via flashback) that Lupin tracked the source of the counterfeit money to Cagliostro—but barely made it out alive—which explains how he knew to go there when he discovered the counterfeiters were at it again. In the dub, he says that, earlier in his career, he "tried to steal the Cagliostro fortune," and we're left wondering how he knew to go there after finding the money.

Macek claims the differences are because he uses the original scripts, not a transcription of the actual dialogue. Having seen some of these scripts, however, I can only assume that he uses them as a rough outline and then adapts as he sees fit, paying more attention to whether the lines match the lips than anything else.

I'd like to say one more thing about subtitles: Pioneer, in an attempt at compromise, is releasing laserdiscs with bilingual audio tracks (English and Japanese) with (to use their own words) "Subtitles through Closed Captioning." Streamline has expressed interest in copying Pioneer's method (and in fact their LDs already have bilingual tracks), but most fans have the sneaking suspicion that their closed caption "subtitles" will be nothing more than a transcription of their "freely adapted" dub scripts, which is indeed what the *TWILIGHT OF THE COCKROACHES* subtitles are.

E. Bernhard Wang
State College, PA

PRO-FASCIST?

Maybe I'm just being overly sensitive. Having just finished a term paper on violence in movies, one can get extremely bored with encountering the word "fascism" in connection with action movies: Dirty Harry is a fascist, Rambo is a fascist, this hero is fascist, that hero is fascist, etc. Why do the critics who fling out this word never stop to consider the fascism of the criminals encountered in these movies? Correct me if I'm wrong, but it seems to me that rape, mugging, terrorism, killing, etc. are forms of fascism infinitely more vile than the brutality used by the hero.

All of this brings me to Steve Biodrowski's recent comments about *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*: "The worst piece of American fas-

cism to hit the screens since the Red Scare movies of the '50s." I find this comment baffling—why is fighting Nazis fascist? Considering the fact that countless atrocities have been committed in the name of Nazism, I can hardly shed a tear for those Nazis who lost their lives during this movie. So what's the explanation for this criticism? Is Mr. Biodrowski completely unaware of the history of Nazism? (I find this hard to believe.) Is it an example of what happens to all idols sooner or later? (This guy has been successful for too long; we better cut him down to size.) I get this impression from Mr. Biodrowski's implication that *INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM* is racist. I fail to see what is racist about fighting devil worshippers who are not above employing torture and human sacrifice. Perhaps the charges of fascism and racism is just political correctness? Minority groups and foreigners are above criticism even if they behave abominably? In any case, if Americans coming to Europe to fight Nazism and devil worship is some sort of bullying, I'm all for bullying.

Soren Thomas
Copenhagen, Denmark

[Yes, you are being overly sensitive. Though I agree the term "fascist" has been overused—for instance, when applied to Dirty Harry—that doesn't mean I am misusing it now. From the dictionary, here's the relevant part of the definition: "belligerent nationalism and racism, glorification of war." You can't deny that RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is nothing if not a glorification of war. It accomplishes this by picking easy historical enemies and then using them to justify every action of the hero, who ends up little more than a mirror image of them. But, because he's American (there's the nationalistic element), he's okay. How many of Jones' victims in RAIDERS are actual Nazi party members responsible for the "countless atrocities" you cite as justification for their deaths? The answer in the film is: it doesn't matter; their uniform and nationality condemn them. Real Nazis deserved the justice meted out at the Nuremberg tri-

als; the fictional representations are just used to make killing seem fun. You overlook that these are characters manipulated by filmmakers in order to advance a particular world view, in which their hero's questionable tactics are always justified. You may find this world view seductive; I, however, will continue to insist that so-called heroes maintain higher moral standards than the villains they combat. As Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) taunts Deckard (Ford again) in BLADERUNNER: "Aren't you supposed to be the good man?" By the way, I was particularly amused by the charge of political correctness—coming from someone who accuses others of casually throwing loaded phrases around.]

ERRATA

The credit listing for the color photos in *Imagi-Movies ULTRAMAN* coverage (2:4:10) should have been: "ULTRAMAN™ ©1995 Tsuburaya Productions Co., Ltd. Photos courtesy of Tsuburaya Prods." □

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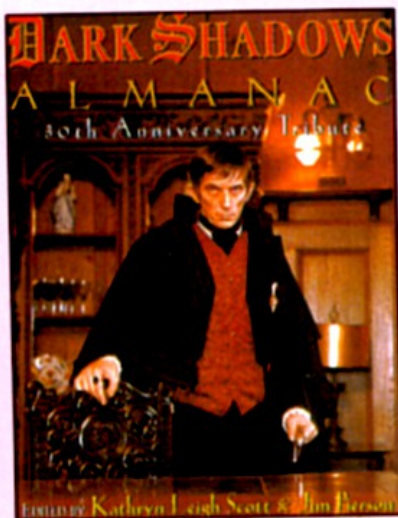
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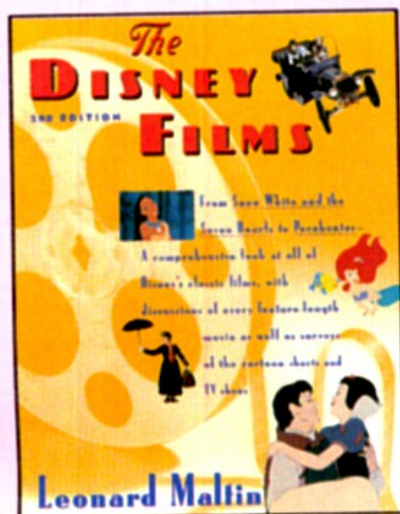


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Straight from the pits of hell comes this devilishly gruesome new book from author Chas. Balun. He leaps straight for the jugular vein when reviewing contemporary splatter/slasher films such as DEMONIA, SILENCE OF THE LAMBS and RAMPAGE. Complete with rating system, celebrity quotes and index. **\$12.95**

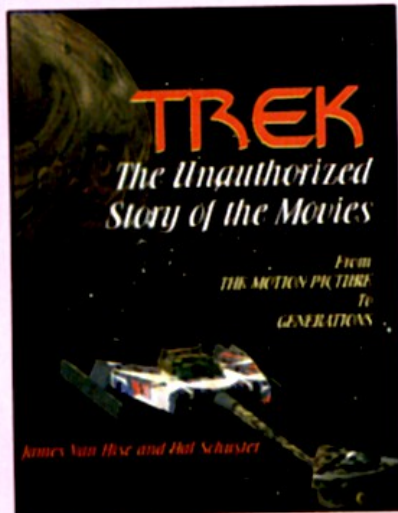
Slasher: The Final Cut
This tongue-in-cheek card game spoofs Hollywood's B-grade horror movies. Featuring movie-like photo-cards, Slasher is the first in the Cinemacard series of humorous card games from Precedence. Play focuses on the scenes that recur with "frightening" regularity in genre films—the "fight" scene, the "sex" scene, the "trail of blood" scene etc. All of the players find themselves trapped in the house along with the slasher. Players introduce plot twists to resolve each scene with the maximum amount of carnage and humor value. Those who enjoy chainsaws, B-Grade horror flicks and gratuitous violence will be dying to get their hands on a copy of this game. Cheap at only **\$14.95**.

Packaging is a shrink-wrapped video cassette box that includes 2 60-card decks, 66 player markers and 1 player map. Ages 13 and up.



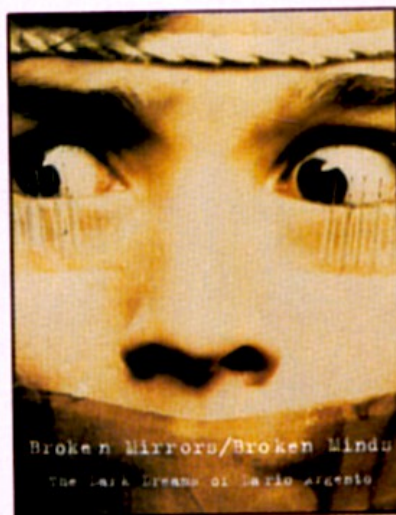
The Disney Films 3rd Edition

For 22 years Disney fans have turned to Leonard Maltin's *The Disney Films*—the only single-volume work that discusses every one of Disney's feature films, both animated and live action—to learn more about their favorites. The 3rd Edition brings readers up to date with info on THE LION KING and POCAHONTAS. **\$16.95**



TREK: The Unauthorized Story of the Movies

James Van Hise and Hal Schuster review and comment on all the STAR TREK movies to date, from THE MOTION PICTURE to GENERATIONS. Published by Pioneer Press, this volume also contains candid color photos of the stars and crew behind these great motion pictures. **\$18.95**



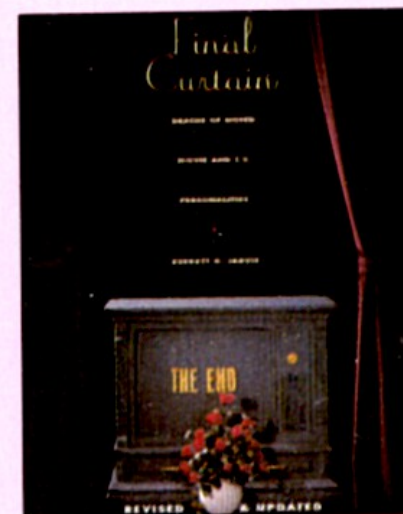
Broken Mirror/Broken Minds

The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento by Maitland McDonagh is a look at the body of Argento's work known mainly to horror film fans since 1970. McDonagh examines the dark dreams of the auteur—filled with twisted logic, rhapsodic violence and stylized excess from their dark origins to their conceptualization on film. **\$18.95**



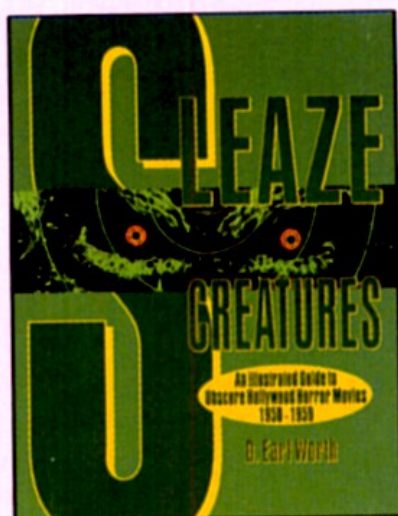
Psycho

Since its release in the summer of 1960, PSYCHO has fascinated and frightened millions of moviegoers all over the world. Film star Janet Leigh shares behind-the-scenes stories from the making of the classic movie; addresses some long-standing myths and explores the movie's impact on the American public. **\$22.00**



Final Curtain

Here from Citadel is an intriguing reference volume containing more than 4000 film and television personalities who have passed away. Each is listed chronologically according to the year of death and then alphabetically. Each listing includes the deceased's age at the time of death and, in most cases, the cause. **\$17.95**



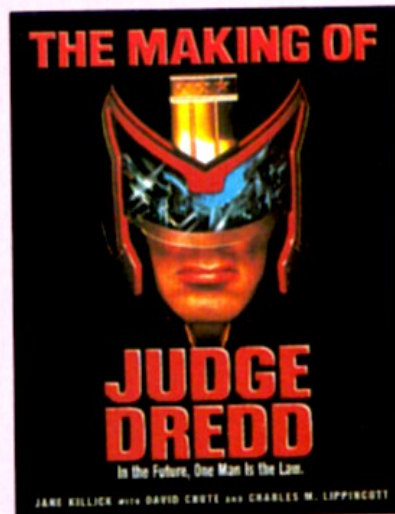
Sleaze Creatures

Author D. Earl Worth takes us on a retrospective journey back to the 1950s to recapture the "true" essence of obscure Hollywood horror movies in his exciting new book. Complete with over 150 rare, never-before-seen movie stills, film synopses and behind-the-scenes anecdotes and facts. An instant collector's item! **\$19.95**



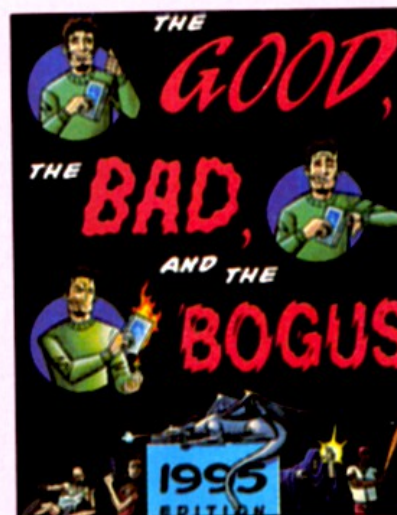
Creature Features Strikes Again

Written by John Stanley, this book contains reviews of 5,614 genre films including TV movies, original videos and novelty items ignored by other major movie guides. Each review contains the names of video and laser companies that have released that title for home viewing. Also included are 230 b&w photos. **\$22.95**



The Making of Judge Dredd

Based upon the internationally popular comic-book hero, JUDGE DREDD is a multi-million-dollar futuristic action thriller starring Sylvester Stallone as Judge Dredd. From the first stroke to a comic book artist's pen to the last snip of the film editor's scissors, this is the complete story of the year's most visually stunning movie. **\$15.95**



The Good, the Bad and the Bogus

Never again waste your money on bad video games! Nathan Lockard's Complete Guide to Video Games, 1995 Edition from Adventure Press comprehensively categorizes and rates video games using a ten point system from "excellent in every way" to "Can this plastic be recycled?" **\$14.95**



The Complete TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

This book by James Van Hise, Hal Schuster and Pioneer completely revises and updates all previous editions. It tells the story how each season was brought to the screen. Detailed reviews of each episode include the names of the writers, directors, and guest stars, making it a handy reference. **\$18.95**

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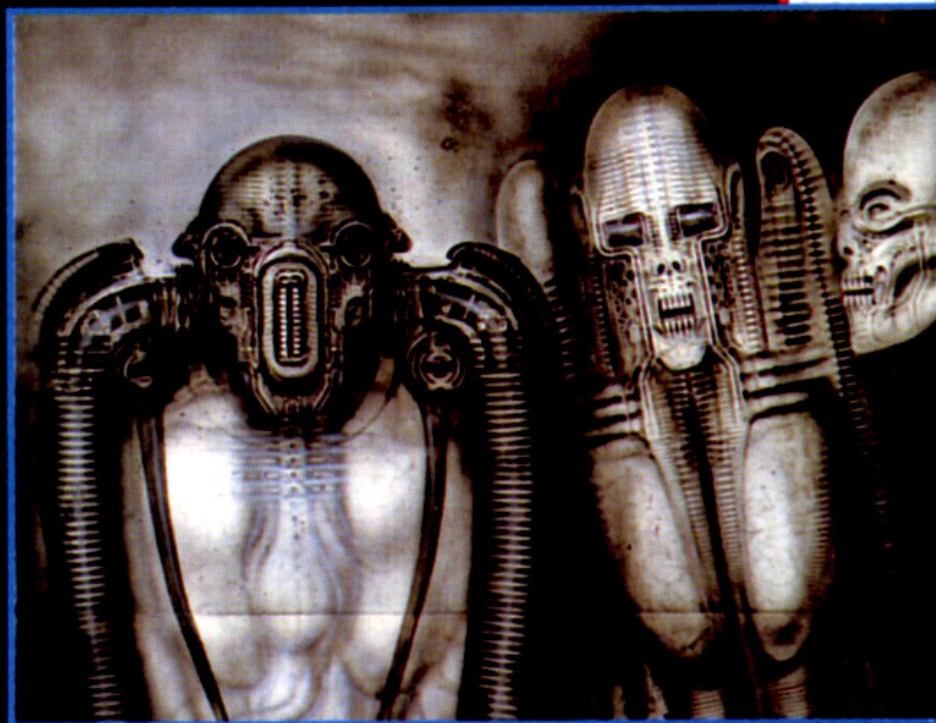
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